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E. SPENCER AND CONSTANCE/MACKY

REMINISCENCES

**Tape Recorded interviews
for the Bancroft Library**

February - March, 1954

Name E. Spencer Macky

Name Constance Macky

Date Jan 28, 1957

E. SPENCER AND CONSTANCE MARY

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Department of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
University of California, Berkeley, California 94720

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publication except by written permission of the
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Berkeley.

INTRODUCTION

The original transcript, after being edited for the reader's Biographies of E. Spencer and Constance Macky can be found in volume 15 (1937) of the California Art Research series produced by the W. P. A. This work was done as part of an experimental oral history project for the Bancroft Library's Manuscript Division, which is under the direction of Dr. Robert E. Burke. British colonials in background (he born in New Zealand on November 16, 1880 and she in Australia June 29, 1883), they studied in Paris when modern art was in lusty adolescence and came to San Francisco in time to see the new art make its first major impact here. For over forty years they have been identified with the flourishing art world of this region, as painters, as teachers, and as leaders in art organizations. Through a series of tape-recorded informal conversations, we have looked at this art world through their eyes.

Our first meeting was on February 2, 1954 in one of the offices of the University of California's Bancroft Library. The last, in March, was held at the Oakland Art Museum. The young director of that museum, Paul Mills, took part in all our discussions.

At the time of our meetings, Spencer Macky was President of the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland. We found him at 73 a neatly tweedy, white haired man of medium height and erect stature -- kindly, convivial and enthusiastic, but somewhat sad and puzzled at how far art had gone from the established principles he had learned as a young man. Mrs. Macky could be present at only one session; we much appreciated her unpretentiousness and her direct Scotch wit.

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Corinne L. Gillip

Bancroft Library
8 October 1954

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ART IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION: A CONTEMPORARY SCENE

- Mrs. Kasky: But they've all developed in the last 15 years.
- Gilb: Paul, you're new to this area. You came here in August, was it? And you hadn't been here much before, had you?
- Mills: No. I was here when I was a boy, but not...
- Gilb: What has been your reaction these past several months to this Bay region that you've come to with a fresh viewpoint?
- Mills: As far as the arts are concerned? One thing that surprised me, in connection with this annual that we're having at the Oakland Art Museum now, and throughout the other exhibitions, is how progressive the area is, how many of the painters of the area take up these new ideas and develop them. And the tremendous, vast number of painters there are in this area. Thousands of them. In Seattle (we have a very good index of how many painters there were there), we listed the name of every artist who had shown in a competitive exhibition in Seattle for the last five years and that totalled 300 people. Here you would literally have thousands.
- Gilb: And also the fact that there has been a single central artists' organization -- the San Francisco Art Association -- that has been progressive over all the years.
- Mills: I wouldn't say there was only that organization. You can find lots of groups, regardless of what the quality of their work is -- the Hayward group and the Alameda group and so on, who don't pretend to be real progressives or leaders but nevertheless are quite active. And there

Glenn: ...now to this area. You came here in August.

Bill: ...and you hadn't been here much before, had you?

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Mills: are hundreds of those. Sausalito has little groups.

Mrs. Macky: But they've all developed in the last 15 years.

Macky: There were just a few artists when we first came here.

Mrs. M: These recent great numbers are largely the fruit, if you like, of the teaching of the various schools around here, turning out the people and showing them the joys of painting.

Mrs. M: The curious thing is that so many of the people who exhibit don't belong to the schools. Where they came from is what I'd like to know. It's quite an amazing thing.

Macky: It's quite a phenomenon.

Mills: Many painters, somehow or another, manage to teach themselves. They learn from seeing what other people have done -- often some of the best painters come up that way.

Mrs. M: And their names are very interesting. They're very European names, you know, Czech names or Italian names.

Macky: You mean all over the United States.

Mrs. M: Especially here, too.

Mills: I don't know that it would be more so here than any other place.

Macky: Now if you want to get anywhere, you have to have a name like Muzensky. It used to be that painters in America had American names, Homer and Bellows. Although Henri (I never could get used to the way you pronounce it), that's a French name. Now we've got all this potpourri of names indicative of the melting pot,

Miss: are hundreds of them. Barcelona has little groups.

Mrs. Neely: But they've all developed in the last 12 years.

Neely: There were just a few artists when we first came here.

These recent great masters are largely the result of

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Neely: How do you want to get together, you have to have a

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America had American names, Boser and Bellows. Although

Neely: I never could get used to the way you pronounce

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response of names indicative of the melting pot.

absorption of people getting into the white collar class
 who were a lot of elements altogether originally when they
 came here.

But that's what America really is.

BEGINNINGS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION

- including the drama. There is an old minutes book at the
- Gilb: Mr. Macky, when did the San Francisco Art Association begin?
- Macky: My impression was that it began around 1871.
- Gilb: You didn't join until much later though, did you?
- Macky: That was long before I was born. I didn't join the San Francisco Art Association, really, until 1917. I was in San Francisco, but I didn't belong although I exhibited there, since 1911.
- Gilb: You did? What do you know about the San Francisco Art Association in those years from 1871 on?
- Macky: Well, those are the years that I am not so familiar with, and I think the information could be obtained from records in the Bohemian Club and the public libraries, and the biographies of the people concerned, particularly the artists and the writers who lived during those years. The early part of the San Francisco Art Association was, by the way, coincident with the beginnings of the Bohemian Club.
- Mills: Do you know what incidents brought about the formation of the San Francisco Art Association?
- Macky: I think it is set forth in the early minutes of the San Francisco Art Association, where the exact wording would be interesting for you to get. It was simply something like this, that certain people associated themselves together for the propagation and for the enjoyment of the arts, not only painting and drawing and sculpture, but also music and literature. And broadly speaking, the early beginnings

MEMBERS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO ART ASSOCIATION

Q: Mr. Hodge, when did the San Francisco Art Association begin?

A: My impression was that it began around 1871.

Q: You didn't join until later than that, did you?

A: That was long before I was born. I didn't join the San Francisco Art Association until 1891. I was in San Francisco, but I didn't belong although I exhibited there, since 1891.

Q: You still don't know about the San Francisco Art Association in those years from 1871 on?

A: Well, those are the years that I am not so familiar with and I think the information could be obtained from records in the Bohemian Club and the public libraries, and the directories of the people connected, particularly the artists and the writers who lived during those years. The early part of the San Francisco Art Association was, by the way, coincident with the beginning of the Bohemian Club.

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A: I think it is set forth in the early minutes of the San Francisco Art Association, where the exact wording will be interesting for you to see. It was simply something like this, that certain people associated themselves together for the propagation and for the enjoyment of the arts, not only painting and drawing and sculpture, but also music and literature. And promptly appearing, the early beginning

Macky: were associated with all of those activities, including the drama. There is an old minutes book at the San Francisco Art Association recording the first minutes and giving a few of the names of the pioneers. I think it was rather difficult to unravel the early relationship between the founding San Francisco Art Association and the Bohemian Club and as to when the separation came. In the early days, I believe they overlapped, but I've never been sufficiently interested to read the early history of the Bohemian Club to find out.

Gilb: And you said there was some connection with newspaper illustration?

Macky: Oh, then -- for the conviviality and congeniality of those who were interested in all the things that are associated with the Bohemian Club today -- many of the earlier so-called artists were illustrators and craftsmen working on the newspaper.

Many an artist has made his start in life by working on the newspapers, doing illustrations and learning to paint on the side, and then graduated to become a painter. Now, I haven't got the chapter and verse on that to tell you which painters started as commercial artists. Jimmy Swinnerton may be one of them. I know Jimmy was, if you can think of him as being a painter. You know what I mean. Jimmy, who's down on the desert now. He was a very well known Bohemian, and he's a very well known painter nationally, for painting the desert. He was president of the Bohemian Club.

Magdy: were associated with all of those activities, including the drama. There is an old student book at the San Francisco Art Association recording the first minutes and giving a list of the names of the painters. I think it was rather difficult to unravel the early relationship between the founding San Francisco Art Association and the Bohemian Club and as to when the separation came. In the early days I believe they overlapped, but I've never been satisfactorily answered as to the early history of the Bohemian Club to find out.

Magdy: And you said there was some connection with newspaper illustrations?

Magdy: Oh, that -- for the country's -- of course, many of those who were interested in all the things that are associated with the Bohemian Club today -- many of the earlier so-called artists were illustrators and craftsmen working on the newspaper.

Magdy: He said he made his start in life by working on the newspapers, doing illustrations and learning to paint on the side, and then graduated to become a painter. Now I haven't got the chapter and verse on that to tell you which painter started as commercial artist. Jimmy Swinnerton may be one of them. I know Jimmy was, if you can think of him as being a painter. You know what I mean, Jimmy, who's down on the desert now. He was a very well known Bohemian, and he's a very well known painter nationally, for painting the desert. He was president of the Bohemian

Mills: Other people like C. S. Price, and Corbett, who started out as newspaper illustrators. Tobey did, also.

Macky: Yes, yes. Oh, I knew Price well.

Gilb: That was before the photograph was used widespread in the newspapers, wasn't it? You wouldn't have the same thing today.

Mills: Yes, that particular generation --

Macky: There was the Nahl family which came up the same way. Well, there are many others. Now one could dig up the names of those people, but what would be the point. Perhaps we should let them rest in peace. But those were the people who created the conviviality.

I've belonged to the Bohemian Club since 1916, and I've just heard a little of the echoes of the old guard that have passed on. (I belong to the "Lists of Fifty", but that has nothing to do with the story.) One has to be a member a good many years before one becomes an old guard (40 years).

But I'm speaking metaphorically. I remember Cadanasso, and I remember Jimmy Swinnerton, and Haig Patigian, and, well, Maynard Dixon, of course. I knew him very well. And Joe Mora. I remember Joe. He's the one who did a great deal in the rehabilitation of the Carmel mission. He did the sculpture of Father Serra and all those things down there. I remember Joe in his prime, see him kicking up on the stage, you know, carrying on.

Wills: Other people like U. S. Price, and Corbett, who started out as newspaper illustrators. Today did, also.

Keagy: Yes, yes. Oh, I knew Price well.

Gill: That was before the photograph was used widespread in the newspaper, wasn't it? You wouldn't have the same thing today.

Wills: Yes, that particular generation --

Keagy: There was the kind of thing which came by the same way. Well, there are many others. How can you find in the names of those people, but what would be the point. Perhaps we should feel that rest in peace. But those were the people who created the country.

I've belonged to the American Club since 1914, and I've just heard a little of the names of the old guard that have passed on. (I belong to the "Circle of 1876", but that has nothing to do with the story.) One has to be a member a good many years before one becomes an old guard (40 years).

But I'm speaking metaphorically. I remember Calhoun, and I remember Mary Swannerton, and Hal Paterson, and well, Margaret Nixon, of course. I know him very well. And Joe Horn. I remember Joe. He's the one who did a great deal in the rehabilitation of the General Mission. He did the sculpture of Father Serra and all those things down there. I remember Joe in his prime, see him sticking up on the stage, you know, carrying on.

Macky: They give wonderful plays in the Bohemian Club. They've always been interested in drama. I used to know George Sterling very well. I never knew Jack London. You see I've just been on the fringe of that old crowd, but they are available for your research workers if you really want to find out, and then when you get them I can add some color to them because I know little incidents about them all and I've talked to them. I stayed with George Sterling. I remember trying to take his boots off, he was so drunk one night. But he insisted on leaving them on. He always had them laced right up to here, you know.

Gilb: Right up to the knees.

Macky: And then there came the time, and I'm not sure of the date, when the old Mark Hopkins mansion on Nob Hill (where the Mark Hopkins Hotel now stands) was bequeathed to the San Francisco Art Association, and before the fire of 1906 very elaborate ceremonies were held there in connection with the openings of their annual art exhibitions. A full description of those events could be found, I'm quite sure, where Sir Henry Hyman -- he was knighted by the king of Samoa, and he liked to be addressed "Sir Henry" -- Sir Henry conducted the orchestra. (I knew him later.) And people came to those receptions in full evening dress, but I'm speaking from hearsay now because it was before my time.

The San Francisco Art Association itself was originally founded to propagate art, to hold exhibitions, and to conduct a school, a school of the arts, the fine arts, you might say. It was a very simple function. It was for

Madge:

They give wonderful plays in the Bohemian Club. They've

always been interested in drama. I used to know George

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remember trying to read his books etc., he was so drunk one

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them lined right up to date, you know.

Right up to the present.

Madge:

And then there were the times, and I'm not sure of the

date, when the old Mark Hopkins mansion on Nob Hill (where

the Mark Hopkins Hotel now stands) was converted to the

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speaking from memory now because it was before my time.

The San Francisco Art Association itself was originally

founded to promote art, to hold exhibitions, and to

conduct a school, a school of the arts, the fine arts. You

might say, it was a very simple transaction. It was for

Macky: social purposes too, for the mutual interest in association and discussion and consideration of the arts. They didn't mention music or literature, particularly. Mostly for the visual arts and conducting of a school, and its major operation until recently has been the operation of a school. They've gone off on a tangent now, and conduct ostensibly (although by remote control) the San Francisco Museum of Art, besides the California School of Fine Arts.

Mills: Well, the annuals there are pretty much directly under the control of the San Francisco Art Association. One thing that interested me very much when you were talking a few moments ago about the early exhibitions of the association: were those then the most important exhibitions of local work in San Francisco?

Macky: Yes. That was the thing, yes. The San Francisco Art Association was the -- before 1915, you mean?

Gilb: Was the Bohemian Club having separate exhibitions?

Macky: Yes, but they were not open to the public except by invitation. It is a club show. In other words, it's a membership show only. One interesting thing, in my impression: up to the time of the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915, people bought pictures because they loved paintings. There was no question about whether the pictures were modern or not; people just bought them because they liked the subject matter. And when the modern art came in, suddenly people began to be leery about buying the accepted thing because they felt now the whole tide was turning and they didn't like the new stuff. They don't yet, quite. And the net result was they didn't buy anything.

Madge:

social purposes too, for the mutual interest in association and discussion and consideration of the arts. They didn't mention much on literature, particularly. Mostly for the visual arts and conducting of a school, and the water department until recently has been the operation of a school. They've gone off on a tangent now, and conduct occasionally (although by remote control) the San Francisco Museum of Art, besides the California School of Fine Arts.

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Bill:

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FILM - PACIFIC COAST, 1913

Macky: So that art patronage suddenly changed and for a while
 died out. They're only beginning after these many years of
 propaganda to have the general public, here and there,
 venture into buying modern art.

Mills: Well, the changes came so fast there that by the time they
 got somewhat used to one movement and the painters came
 from it, there'd be a new one coming.

Macky: That's it. It's still changing. Take the drip school
 right now across the Bay in the School of Fine Arts. Nobody
 likes that, and nobody understands it, and yet some still
 maintain that that is the avant-garde in painting. Although
 it's beginning to die out again because it has no back to
 it, no bottom to it. But you can talk on that more than
 I can. I could if I had time to prepare for it.

... it wasn't a local project by any means. ...
 ... designed

King: So that the program was changed and for a while
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Hill: Well, the changes came so fast there that by the time they
 got a market ready to buy movement and the related work
 that is, there'd be a new one coming.

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 it's beginning to die out again because it was so hard to
 it, no better so it. But you can talk on that more than
 I can. I could sit there to prepare for it.

Macky: The great 1915 show itself -- the Panama-Pacific show -- was a great eye filler for the public here, in giving a panorama of the past history of painting, practically. They brought out all kinds of exhibitions from many countries, and there were retrospective exhibitions of California art too. I've seen that reviewed here recently somewhere. In Neuhaus' book, a little sketch of it. He could tell you much more about that because he was in on more of that sort of thing, you know.

Mills: We were talking about the work of the artists and sculptors in preparation for the Exposition, and you mentioned that Jules Guerin was the color expert.

Macky: Yes, I think it was an understood thing, the color harmony of each building, each nation there, to more or less fit in with the color scheme of the whole. I don't think he dominated it exactly, although there were the official buildings and the official courts, which are described fully in these books which you have, no doubt. And no doubt there's a color record of them all too. As I say, it's significant that they had murals, by Frank Brangwyn from England, for example, which I've mentioned before. Others, which I have forgotten for the moment - there were so many of them.

Oh, Yes, it wasn't a local project by any means. Several of the local architects got big commissions here. The architect who designed the DeYoung Museum (Louis Mulgardt) was one; Arthur Brown was another -- the architect who designed

Meigs:

-- the Great 1913 show itself -- the Panama-Pacific show -- was a great eye opener for the public here, in giving a glimpse of the past history of painting, practically. They brought out all kinds of exhibitions from many countries and there were retrospective exhibitions of California art too. I've seen that reviewed here recently somewhere. In Kansas' book a little sketch of it. He would tell you much more about that ~~background~~ was in on one of that sort of thing, you know.

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Oh, yes, it wasn't a local project by any means. Several of the local architects got big commissions here. The architect who designed the Kellogg Museum (Louis Kellogg) was one; Arthur Brown was another -- the architect who designed

Macky: the City Hall. These facts are all available.

The sky was more or less the limit when they spent millions all of a sudden for a great Exposition in 1914/15. It was an international Exposition opening just at the beginning of the First World War, which prevented the Central Powers from participating as extensively as originally planned.

Mills: The French painting in the Palace of Fine Arts included people like Matisse? Do you remember what sort of reaction there was to those contemporary French painters at the time?

Macky: Well, Matisse at the time of the Panama-Pacific Exposition hadn't come into his own yet. He and Picasso et al had not yet made the headlines.

Mills: I know that Monet -- one of his beach scenes; it's quite well known -- was shown in the original Palace of Fine Arts. It's quite a large, important painting, a water scene with a few figures on a terrace. I think it's called "Terrace at Le Havre". Do you remember seeing that or what reaction there was to his work?

Macky: No, although I knew Monet's work very well in Paris. I think we were just dazed with the many little cubicles filled with pictures. You'd walk into one cubicle and then another one and then another one. They may have had some of Winslow Homer, I don't know. You'll just have to look up the catalogue. I don't remember them all. I know there was a section of Sargent, for example, and some of his best works were there.

Mills: I know there was Winslow Homer. What struck the painters

the City Hall. These facts are all available. Macky:

The city was more or less the limit when they spent millions
all of a sudden for a great exposition in 1889. It
was an international exposition opening just at the beginning
of the Great World War, which prevented the General Powers
from participating as extensively as originally planned.

The French residing in the Palace of the Arts included
people like Mallarmé. Do you remember what sort of reaction
there was to those contemporary French writers at the time?

Well, Mallarmé at the time of the Franco-Belgian Exposition
hadn't come into his own yet. He and Rimbaud et al had not
yet made the headlines.

I know that Mallarmé -- one of his best poems; it's quite
well known -- was shown in the original Palace of the Arts.
It's quite a large, important painting, a water scene with
a few figures on a terrace. I think it's called "Terrace
at la Haye". Do you remember seeing that or what reaction
there was to his work?

No, although I know Mallarmé's work very well in Paris. I
think we were just faced with the very little cubists
filled with pictures. You'd walk into one article and then
another one and then another one. They may have had some of
Wassilow's work, I don't know. You'll just have to look up
the catalogue. I don't remember them all. I know there was
a section of sculpture, for example, and some of his best work
was there.

I know there was Wassilow's work. What struck the painters
Mallarmé:

Mills: most of anything they saw in that original Palace of Fine Arts? It was the "grand finale" of the West of the Arts?

Macky: The American school of painting was very well represented from the earliest times. Also the then contemporary American painting was very extensively and adequately represented -- it was hardly the time to get excited about any new discovery, although they gave Freiseke the first prize for a painting of a nude en plein air which was indicative of the taste of the time.

Gilb: Did they get excited about any particular paintings more than others?

Macky: No, I think they were just dazed: it was bewilderingly varied.

Gilb: By the color or the impact -- ?

Macky: No, by the enormity of it. It was vast. It was a tremendous exhibition, must have cost many thousands of dollars to install.

Mills: There were thousands and thousands of paintings, too.

Gilb: Well, maybe that kind of vast exhibition isn't too effective if it just dazes people.

Macky: It wasn't very effective in itself alone. Many of the painters who were here at the time were quite familiar with the art work of the world. I don't think they were all local people. Most of us had been in Europe or had come from Europe or something like that. There was nothing particularly new. But it was just as if you were to collect now an exhibition of the last fifty or hundred years and to bring

Willa: most of anything they saw in that original release of time

Arise!

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from the earliest times. Also the then contemporary

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prize for a painting of a man in plain air which was

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local people. Most of us had been in Europe or had come from

Europe or something like that. There was a certain familiarity

new. But it was just as if you were to collect now an

exhibition of the last fifty or hundred years and to bring

Macky: it out here and look at it all, gallery after gallery.

Macky: I think it was the "grand finale" of the best of the older art, before the curtain raiser of the newer art expression (the Armory Show, 1912) had made itself universally known.

Mills: I think what we should do is discuss the Annex exhibition, which was patterned after the Armory Show, your opinions about it, what effect it had on the artists who saw it, and the things which stemmed from that, and the changes in San Francisco and California art which came as a result of the influence of that Annex show.

Gilb: You'd say it was the Annex show rather than the Exposition that did all these things?

Mills: Well, both together, wouldn't you say, Mr. Macky?

THE "ANNEX": WEST COAST EQUIVALENT OF THE ARMORY SHOW

Macky: Well, suddenly you come to a new thing, a break, and that was the "Annex", which was set up after the main exhibition had been installed in the Palace of Fine Arts. If I remember rightly it was hung about 1916 in an "Annex" building especially constructed for the purpose.

The 1915 Exposition was nearly over, but the Palace of Fine Arts continued in existence and was still in operation under the direction of the San Francisco Association and Mr. Laurvik, J. Nilsen Laurvik, was now the Director.

He had great ideals and tremendous ambition, with a very driving personality. And his secretary's name was Miss Nealy Sullivan.

Incidentally, Nealy is still the secretary of the San Francisco Art Association at the present time, and if you can contact her you can get a lot of information from her because she has a more or less photographic memory. She was out there as his secretary until he left San Francisco. Just when the San Francisco Art Association moved from there, I don't remember exactly. It was under the auspices of the San Francisco Art Association. I don't know who paid Laurvik's salary, but finally the thing blew up, and I remember I had the job of cataloguing and bringing all the books in to the California School of Fine Arts. They had collected a large library of books, and those are books that are now in the library at the San Francisco Art Association in San Francisco. A fine collection.

THE "ANNEX" : WEST COAST EQUIVALENT OF THE AMORY SHOW

Henry :

Well, suddenly you came to a new thing, a book, and that

was the "Annex", which was set up after the main exhibition

had been installed in the Palace of Fine Arts. It I

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books in to the California School of Fine Arts. They had

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that are now in the library at the San Francisco Art Association

in San Francisco, a fine collection.

Macky: But there was that temporary gallery built, which was called the "Annex". And in it Mr. Laurvik, with his keen perception of the realities of the changing mood of things, had assembled an exposition of paintings which were in character - much like the ones at the Armory Show (of 1913). They were not just transported from the Armory Show. Some of them were. I mention one in particular, which was called "Nude Descending the Stairs", by Duchamp. Interesting thing about that, too, was that Mr. Torrey, of Vickery, Atkins and Torrey, bought that painting. Eventually it got into the hands of the Arensberg* Collection in Los Angeles, and now it belongs to the Arensberg Collection in (where is it now?) Philadelphia or somewhere in the East. Well, Mr. Torrey told me this anecdote: He said, "You know, I was on the train for the East, and I kept worrying about that painting. I thought I should have bought that picture." It was a very controversial picture. And he said, "I got as far as Salt Lake City, and my conscience cut me so much that I got the next train back to San Francisco and I bought 'Nude Descending the Stairs.'" He said to himself, "I haven't bought that thing; and someone else will buy it."

In fact I think Mr. Laurvik took a fiendish delight in shocking our Western art public. There for the first time we saw assembled pictures such as I had not seen since 1908/9/10 in Paris. (I did not see the Armory Show of 1913 in New York.) There everything that we are now familiar with was first seen in San Francisco. Distorted forms, exaggeration of proportions, and colors of the brightest

*Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Moody:

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called the "annex". And in it Mr. Jewell, with his keen

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Macky: hues juxtaposed. It was exciting and provocative, but far too varied to make a simple impression. It was the advance guard of the many "movements" that we have experienced ever since. The old standards were gone - now, "the sky was the limit" - since then San Francisco has considered herself the avant-garde in matters pertaining to ART.

I remember when I first came here. I think about 1911, probably it was, 1911. I went to the exhibition of paintings at the San Francisco Art Association in its art gallery, which was on the site of the present Mark Hopkins Hotel. Not being critical at all -- I was just as innocent as you are, coming into the town, and I said to Captain Fletcher, the Director, -- I'd just come from Paris, you know -- I said, "It's funny the pictures all look so brown here." I wasn't critical, I know I wasn't critical. It was a peculiar phenomenon to me. And everybody was so happy and complacent about this brown soup show.

Mills: A reflection of Keith and --

Macky: Yes, all that sort of thing. And I remember the next year, my wife came and we were married here, and she exhibited a picture, and it stood out like a sore finger. It was a painting of Venice, you know, with beautiful bright color. They didn't put it on the line. They didn't know what to do with it -- stuck it up high.

Then, suddenly like a bombshell this "Annex" came out there in 1916, and it was just a blaze of all kinds of experiment in color, exaggeration of color and exaggeration of form and

Handy:

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Wells:

Handy:

A reflection of both and -- You, sir, first sort of thing. And I remember the next year, my wife came and we were married here, and she exhibited a picture, and it stood out like a sore thumb. It was a painting of Venice, you know, with beautiful bright color. They didn't put it on the line. They didn't know what to do with it -- stuck it up high.

Then, suddenly like a bolt of lightning, came out there in 1916, and it was just a blaze of all kinds of experiment in color, experimentation of color and experimentation of form and

Macky: distortion of form. In fact, modern art had finally reached the West Coast.

of was on these walls. There were people's paintings made Now, I remember very distinctly as a student in Paris, like Egyptian paintings, where women were sitting sideways (1908/9) on Sunday afternoons going down to the banks of the Seine and walking through acres of tents, beautifully made tents, with pictures on the walls, pictures which they were just funny looking pictures. would not be allowed to be hung in any public building in

Gilb: What a ferment the art world must have been in Paris because they thought they were beyond the pale. That

Macky: Well, I'm telling you, what we used to see walking around -- was the Independent. And people would be in there just splitting their sides looking and laughing at these things. So don't think, just because you're modern here now, 1954, they were not very modern way back in Paris in, let's say,

Gilb: Did you find that same spirit here when you came here, or 1907 or '08. Way back there. And there were rumors in the air at that time that things were not the same as they used to be, that things were changing. And the students were

Gilb: Do you think it's ever come up? not satisfied to study where I was studying, particularly.

Macky: In little groups, yes. But in an eclectic way.

Mills: Where did you study?

Macky: Well, when you first came here -- In Julien Academy. Derain was a student there with me, and Segonzac. Fellows like that. And I'd hear rumors about a student going over to "La Palette" to study with Emil Blanche, and I wondered what the heck he'd want to do that for. Well, there were rumors that things were not the same and people were not studying the way they used to do. And that there were new ideas coming.

Certainly there were new ideas. You walked down the Seine there and really -- I saw two nude women mutilating themselves, cutting themselves off here, and blood running down into great

I don't know. Is it an inferiority complex? Or what can

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MacGy:

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made tents, with pictures on the walls, pictures which

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there and really -- I saw two nude women mutilating themselves,

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Macky: jars; pornographic things; frightful things -- anything, subject altogether, now.
Macky: anything that the human mind with its bestiality could think of was on those walls. There were people's paintings made like Egyptian paintings, where women were sitting sidewise milking cows, like this, all sideways, supposed to be the tradition of Egypt. They were not immoral or anything. They were just funny looking pictures.

Gilb: What a ferment the art world must have been in !

Macky: Well, I'm telling you, what we used to say walking around -- We used to say, "Gosh, there's going to be a war pretty soon. There must be. This is symptomatic." Sure enough, 1914 came the war, didn't it? I was there long before 1914.

Gilb: Did you find that same spirit here when you came here, or was it entirely different?

Macky: No, no, no. Dead as a doornail. Dead. Beautifully asleep.

Gilb: Do you think it's ever woke up?

Macky: In little spasms, yes. But in an eclectic way.

Mills: Well, when you first came here --

Macky: By an eclectic way, pardon me, I mean to say, unfortunately, I was hoping the first world war would stop all that, that Americans would stand on their own feet and be themselves and not go looking toward Europe, paint their own country or their own selves, you see. But oh, no. As soon as they begin to get going again a little bit, "What are they doing in Paris? What's the latest thing in New York? Or Henry Moore's doing these things in London; O.K., let's do these hollow nudes out here." Everybody's doing the same thing all over the world. Work that out and tell me why. I don't know. Is it an inferiority complex? Or what can it be? There's a certain psychology -- that's another

Maciej: ...; photographic things; ... things -- ...

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THE "INTELLECTUALS" IN ART

Macky: subject altogether, now.

Mills: There was something you mentioned that interested me very much, the fact that cubism started out under the name of --

Macky: Crystallism. It wasn't given that name officially, but we used to just talk about it like that in the cafes long before "Cubism" was invented. In a sort of jiving way. Because if you remember, it was based upon the crystalline character of forms which you see under the microscope. You'll find that then the alternation of light and dark and the interplay of spaces and planes gives the basis of this modern painting. That gives the excuse. They were inter-spread with curves later on, and lines, and it got more mechanically and architectonic as it went along later on. That was all in the air at the time, from 1907 to 1912 when I was there, and developed and went further after I left.

That I was a student in Paris, no one that I heard of was talking about Cezanne. As soon as I got to America, the propagandists began to come through, and lecturers came through, and slides were shown showing us the beauties of Cezanne.

Mills: That wasn't until after 1910 that Cezanne...

Mrs. M: 1913. That's Willard Huntington Wright, who gave those lectures?

Macky: The man I read that book, Modern Painting by Willard Huntington Wright. Published in 1915.

Mrs. M: He was the Van Dyke who wrote all those mystery stories later.

Mrs. M: His brother THE "INTELLECTUALS" IN ART.

Macky: Macdonald Wright, that's his brother. (Synchrostat)

Mills: There was something you mentioned that interested me very much, the fact that cubism started out under the name of --

Macky: That's when the vocabulary began to come into painting.

Macky: Crystallism. It wasn't given that name officially, but when you started reading Macdonald Wright. God, the words he used! He used to have these jawbreakers, and before "Cubism" was invented. In a sort of jibing way, he sounded tremendously impressive talking to all these society women about art. (Note added later: re-reading the book recently it seems comparatively simple now - you must have learned something.)

Mills: You'll find that then the alternation of light and dark and the interplay of spaces and planes gives the basis of this modern painting. That gives the excuse. They were inter-

Mills: I was very interested about this crystallism that you mentioned the influence of microscope studies that were mechanistic and architectonic as it went along later on. That was all in the air at the time, from 1907 to 1910 when I was there, and developed much more rapidly after that you got through the microscope of biological. I left.

Macky: you find that from a little more firmly what the whole was. When I was a student in Paris, no one that I heard of was talking about Cezanne. As soon as I got to America, the propagandists began to come through, and lecturers came through, and slides were shown showing us the beauties of Cezanne. We were just specializing in 1907/8.

Mills: That wasn't until after 1910 that Cezanne...

Mrs. M: 1913. That's Willard Huntington Wright, who gave those lectures? I forget the exact date. They were during a retrospective exhibition in Paris of all this work.

Macky: You ought to read that book, Modern Painting by Willard Huntington Wright. Published in 1915.

Mrs. M: He was the Van Dyne who wrote all those mystery stories later.

THE "CRYSTALLINE" IN ART

Willis: There was something you mentioned that interested me very much, the fact that crystal started out under the name of --

Madge: Crystalline. It wasn't given that name officially, but we used to just talk about it like that in the early days before "Crystal" was invented. In a sort of jibing way. Because if you remember, it was based upon the crystalline character of forms which you see under the microscope. You'll find that then the alternation of light and dark and the interplay of spaces and planes gives the basis of this modern painting. That gives the excuse. They were interested with curves later on, and lines, and it got more mechanistic and architectural as it went along later on. That was all in the air at the time, from 1907 to 1910 when I was there, and developed much more rapidly after I left.

When I was a student in Paris, no one that I heard of was talking about Cezanne. As soon as I got to America, the propagandists began to come through, and lecturers came through, and slides were shown showing us the beauties of Cezanne.

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Madge: You ought to read that book, Modern Painting by Willard Huntington Wright, published in 1915.

Mrs. M.: He was the Van Dyme who wrote all those mystery stories later.

Mrs. M: His brother is down in Los Angeles.

Macky: MacDonal(d) Wright, that's his brother. (Synchronist)

Mrs. M: Painter.

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Macky: when you started reading Huntington Wright. Gee, the words he uses! He used to have these jawbreakers, and he sounded tremendously impressive talking to all these society women about art. (Note added later: Re-reading the book recently it seems comparatively simple now - one must have learned something.)

Gilb: Just the thing to make it catch on!

Mills: I was very interested about this crystallism when you

Mills: mentioned the influence of microscope studies that were

Macky: being made then. A great deal of contemporary non-objective art relates rather closely to the view of nature that you get through the microscope or photograph. Can you pin that down a little more firmly what the source was there, what talk there was of it anywhere in Paris?

Macky: No. But I have a little pamphlet at home written by Albert Gleiszes called "Painting and Its Laws". And in it there's a chapter about crystallism, but he doesn't go into it very clearly. We were just speculating in 1907/8, laying the groundwork for Cubism.

Afterwards, I forget the exact date, they were having a retrospective exhibition in Paris of all this avant-garde painting, and it was either Matisse or someone -- we've

But to get back to San Francisco. After all the exhibits were

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Macky: never been quite certain who -- who said, "Ah, vous fait du cubism maintenant." And the word "Cubism" has stuck ever since.

Gilb: That was in Paris.

Macky: Now then, the teachers -- especially American teachers -- taking things literally and putting two and two together (Cezanne had said all painting is based on the cube, the cylinder, the cone, and so forth), took this cube and began to teach art by the cube. The French -- that one you spoke of a moment ago -- De La Fresnaye, he did develop a little of the cube idea, but he died young, you see. He was one of the very promising young people.

Mills: Was he active in France when you were there?

Macky: Probably. I didn't go to France like I went to New Zealand recently. I didn't go to meet people or to go off on "isms", I went to learn. And I worked hard. If I'd been one of the intellectuals over there, you know, and an eclectic, as so many of the others were, coming in there to grab a little of this and a little of that and then jump back to America again with new ideas -- I went there to study very hard. I was mistaken. Probably I should have been like some of those Canadians, who used to do these interesting black and red things, you know, like you've got in the gallery. They were doing those things, then, fortysix years ago. It didn't appeal to me because I was trying to paint. Alas we are now in the clutches of the intellectuals in Art.

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those Canadians, who used to do these interesting black and
red things, you know, like you've got in the gallery. They
were doing those things, then, twenty years ago. It didn't
appear to me because I was trying to paint. Also we are now
in the circles of the intellectuals in art.

But to get back to San Francisco. After all the exhibits were

Macky: returned, and the Annex had been torn down again, Laurvik had a series of exhibitions in the Palace of Fine Arts. He made first of all a very significant collection of the paintings of the local people who were here at the time. I know I had two on exhibition, two large ones, oh, months and months they were hanging up there. My wife had some too, and Piazzoni, and all the artists who were here. But that is neither here nor there. That was a sort of a -- it wasn't just a little exhibition for a couple of weeks; they kept it on for a year or more.

Then they also had these great exhibitions by that Russian, that mystic, what's his name, Roerich, a tremendous exhibition of Roerich. And Roerich himself was out here, giving lectures on his mystical, philosophical beliefs. Most important was the huge exhibition of Zuloaga - and another by Boris Annesfeld - these had a definite influence on the local artist. In fact everyone seemed to be painting like Zuloaga for awhile!

election. And they vote by vote, too. I didn't know what I was voting for. I remember then saying, "Mr. Macky has voted." Whatever it was for, I've forgotten. But anyway I know they sent a bus up from the Bolshoi to send people up to vote. However, they won the day, and a new regime took over (1917).

And the re-acting was headed by John I. Walters, a merchant, not an artist. But John I. eventually became a very good

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 Zolotarev for awhile!

Macky: NEW REGIME IN THE ART ASSOCIATION , 1917

Gilb: You said there was a controversy in the San Francisco Art Association just before you joined. What was that?

Macky: Oh, well. There probably were Ralph Stackpole, Ricardo Piazzoni, and Gertrude Albright, and maybe a few others. I can't quite think of their names, now, but my wife could tell us. There was a group, oh, Arthur Mathews, and Francis McComas.

Mills: Was Keith a member of the Association?

Macky: Yes, I think so. Anyway, they wanted to clean out the deadwood in the San Francisco Art Association. They felt it was moribund, just the same as if I stayed on here forever, I'd get moribund. Know what I mean? The only way to get rid of you is to do something about it. And so they decided to have an election, and they decided to change the Board of Directors.

Now the Board of Directors in those days was interlocked with the Bohemian Club membership. I remember, I was there at the election. And they made me vote, too. I didn't know what I was voting for. I remember them saying, "Mr. Macky has voted." Whatever it was for, I've forgotten. But anyway I know they sent a bus up from the Bohemian Club to send people up to vote. However, they won the day. And a new regime took over (1917).

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Association just before you joined. What was that?

Macoy: Oh, well. There probably were Ralph Stackpole, Ricardo

Pearson, and Gertrude Albritton, and maybe a few others. I

can't quite think of their names, now, but my wife could

tell us. There was a group, oh, Arthur Mathews, and Francis

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regime took over (1917).

And the new regime was headed by John I. Walter, a merchant,

not an artist. But John I. eventually became a very good

- Macky: friend of mine. His brother was Edgar Walter, the sculptor, a wonderful person (deceased). And there was a coterie of people there that were getting control of the Art Association, who wanted to clean it out and really make it progressive. In those days, they thought I was progressive. They had me come in and teach, and all that sort of thing. And I did come in with a good deal of spark. And that was the beginning of that. Incidentally about seventy students followed us. (Mrs. Macky and I both had had students for years.)
- Mills: Maybe the thing to do is to relate the Annex showing to the changes in the Art Association, and if possible something about the people who were influenced by the Annex and who carried that new thought into the Art Association in the School of Fine Arts.
- Gilb: Mr. Macky was just telling me while you were out, Paul, that he didn't think the Annex shows per se brought about this revolt. He thought that it was in the air already anyway.
- Macky: I think that, with all due respect, there was rather a progressive little group here at the time that the school became the School of Fine Arts, 1917. Now, of course that was -- no doubt, the Exposition that had brought that to a head, and the Annex reinforced it and gave it authority. There was such a thing as a modern art here before, but for a long time the proponents of progressiveness in art here were not searching for the dernier cri in the world. They

friend of mine. His brother was Edgar Walter, the sculptor, a wonderful person (deceased). And there was a coterie of people there that were getting control of the Art Association, who wanted to clean it out and really make it progressive. In those days, they thought I was progressive. They had me come in and teach, and all that sort of thing. And I did come in with a good deal of spirit. And that was the beginning of that. Incidentally about seventy students followed us. (Mrs. Macky and I both had had students for years.)

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Macky:

Mills:

Giff:

Macky:

- Macky: had a definite idea of simplicity, of what was right and what was wrong, all on their own. I don't know, and because
- Mills: Was this group around Martinez or was it one following that?
- Macky: Martinez. Personally I always felt that he was over-estimated, but I had a high respect for him. He came back from Paris deeply imbued with the teachings of Benjamin Constant, I think that was his teacher. In other words, he was sanely drilled in the academic approach to painting.
- Mills: Well, his things were mostly very Whistlerian, weren't they?
- Macky: I don't think that he followed Whistler much. Arthur Mathews definitely did. And he may have been a little influenced by Whistler, but, no, he hadn't been to England. He just had a good sane way of looking at things. His drawings were simple in line, very like the drawings of Constant. He was at the Academie Julien before my time. He was older than I, and he came out here imbued with that thoroughness. Europe a great deal, and one thinks one knows what is good and what is bad in Art. Somewhere or another, I don't know Arts and Crafts in Berkeley and Oakland, and a member of the Bohemian Club.
- There was a little stubborn group in San Francisco --
- Mills: Piazzoni, Stackpole, and Gertrude Albright, and some
- Macky: others -- who quietly wielded great influence.
- Mills: I'd like to ask for a little more information about this group around -- what's the Italian name, Piazzoni? And Stackpole. Who were the others you'd call the progressive group? Lee V. Randolph, Ray Boynton, Clark Robert,

had a definite idea of simplicity, of what was right and what was wrong, all on their own.

Was this group around Martine or was it one following that?

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were simple in line, very like the drawings of Constant. He

was at the Academie Julien before my time. He was older

than I, and he came out here imbued with that thoroughness.

Martine was a great teacher at the California School of

Arts and Crafts in Berkeley and Oakland, and a member of the

Robinson Club.

There was a little student group in San Francisco --

Piazoni, Stachole, and Gertrude Albricht, and some

others -- who quietly wielded great influence.

Willis: I'd like to ask for a little more information about this

group around -- what's the Italian name, Piazoni? and

Stachole. Who were the others you'd call the progressive

group?

Macky: Gertrude Partington Albright. She's a little bit of a thing, you know. She's an elderly lady now, and because she's blind she doesn't want to talk because she doesn't think that she could stand the strain. She is one of those little people who know everything. And she has that indefinable moral force. She was a child prodigy. She was the daughter of a father who taught art -- his name was H. J. Partington -- who had quite an influential art school in the early days in San Francisco. She could tell you about that. His son, Dick, ran the Piedmont Art Gallery -- Richard Partington -- The father came from England (with a large family) in the early days and was a very well educated person. I mean he was well-informed and capable. He taught drawing and I've no doubt many of those people who were working on the newspapers in those early days were his pupils. And this girl was his daughter. She's travelled in Europe a great deal, and she thinks she knows what is good and what is bad in Art. Somehow or another, I don't know the psychology of it, but if you're not at all reticent about believing that you know everything, people will begin to believe that you know everything.

Gilb: Quite true.

Macky: Gottardo Piazzoni, Ralph Stackpole and Gertrude Partington (later she married H. Oliver Albright who developed into a significant artist) always remain in my memory, but there were others almost equally self-opinionated, but not quite so much so: Lee F. Randolph, Ray Boynton, Clark Hobart,

Healy:

Gertrude Livingston Albright. She's a little bit of a thing, you know. She's an elderly lady now, and because she's blind she doesn't want to talk because she doesn't think that she could stand the strain. She is one of those little people who know everything. And she has that indefinable moral force. She was a child prodigy. She was the daughter of a father who taught art -- his name was H. J. Livingston -- who had quite an influential art school in the early days in San Francisco. She could tell you about that. His son, Dick, ran the Piedmont Art Gallery -- Richard Livingston -- the father came from England (with a large family) in the early days and was a very well educated person. I mean he was well-informed and capable. He taught drawing and I've no doubt many of those people who were working on the newspapers in those early days were his pupils. And this girl was his daughter. She's travelled in Europe a great deal, and she thinks she knows what is good and what is bad in Art. Somehow or another, I don't know the psychology of it, but if you're not at all reticent about believing that you know everything, people will begin to believe that you know everything.

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Healy:

Macky: Henry Varnum Poor, Egisto Cuneo, Anne Bremer and Constance Macky (my wife), Eugen Neuhaus, and many more -- there were some interesting characters in those days from 1915 on.

I've been on juries with them, and I was often the chairman of juries of selection and juries of awards. In fact, I was on so many juries I never got any awards myself. I remember once being chairman of a jury when we bought Bill Gaw's first picture, it was a purchase prize. It's owned out at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum.

Mills: In addition to Gertrude Albright, was there anyone else in that group? How about Maynard Dixon, was he in there?

Macky: No, Maynard was a lone wolf. I remember him getting up at the Artists' Council meeting one night and saying, "Well, I'm leaving. I'm a lone wolf, and I'm not going to come back any more, and I'm just going to paint on my own." And he went on his own from that day on. He wasn't going to waste his time coming to meetings. And I think he was very wise. He just spent the rest of his life painting. I remember I thought, "Well, that's pretty wise of him."

Gilb: It is.

Macky: I don't know why I went in for all this Education business -- my love of human nature, I suppose.

Gilb: Well, you know that's something else again, that is something wonderful in itself and I wouldn't belittle it at all.

Macky: I just love people, love students, I love the problem of it all. I'm not at all prejudiced although I do question things.

Henry: Henry Vernon Poor, Elvira Gomez, Anne Bremer and Constance
Hedy (my wife), Frank Newman, and many more -- there were

some interesting characters in those days from 1915 on.
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of juries of selection and juries of awards. In fact, I

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Henry: I just love people, love students, I love the problem of it

all. I'm not at all prejudiced although I do question things.

Macky: I question the sincerity of people when I notice they

Macky: change their style overnight and are painting like some-
thing else or somebody else, which I don't understand.

Mrs. H: But you can't help but be influenced, mind you. A real

Station. Very lovable person.

Who else was there? Oh, there must be others. Armin Hansen.

Macky: He got up to give a lecture at the Palace of Fine Arts.

But Armin Hansen moved down to Monterey. And he's a significant
and they had him standing all time in there. And all
character, too. Gay was down there and --

Mills: Gay's another. He was in that progressive group in the Art
that all the other talks that had gone before or since.
Association?

Mrs. H: Just that, too.

Macky: No, he never was. He just went off and lived down there.

Macky: His works are very simple. They finally got him a commission

He wasn't so important, really, although he did a few nice
to do some murals in the public library entrance to San
things.

Mills: What about Gaskin?

Macky: Gaskin too. I saw him the other day. Well, he's the kind
of fellow who will take a leaf and spend a year studying a

Mrs. H: There was one thing about him. He was a real California
leaf and come up with an exhibition of a few lines. Peculiar
He was born in California. And lived in California. It
character, you know.

Macky: wasn't an import.

Mills: People with a quiet (I don't know what word to use) confidence;

Mrs. H: when they say a thing is good, it's good! Like Mrs. Albright.

Macky: She knows. If she's on a jury: "That's bad. I know it's

Mrs. H: bad." And everybody seems to agree with her. Stackpole

was the same way, and it would be somebody like Stackpole

Macky: or Piazzoni or Mrs. Albright that they all would look to.

Mills: And They're not as voluble as I am. You'd never get a con-

Mrs. H: versation like this rambling sort of thing that I'm giving
you. They would say nothing.

Macky: Well, I know some of those lovable people, but so confident.

Piazzoni would say very little. And he had quite a following.

Macy: I question the sincerity of people when I notice they change their style overnight and are painting like some- thing else or somebody else, which I don't understand. But you can't help but be influenced, mind you.

Macy: Who else was there? Oh, there must be others. Armin Hansen. But Armin Hansen moved down to Monterey. And he's a significant character, too. Gay was down there and --

Milla: Gay's another. He was in that progressive group in the art association?

Macy: No, he never was. He just went off and lived down there. He wasn't so important, really, although he did a few nice things.

Milla: What about Gashin?

Macy: Gashin too. I saw him the other day. Well, he's the kind of fellow who will take a year and spend a year studying a few and come up with an exhibition of a few lines. Peculiar character, you know.

People with a quiet (I don't know what word to use) confidence; when they say a thing is good, it's good! Like Mrs. Albright. She knows. If she's on a jury: "That's bad. I know it's bad." And everybody seems to agree with her. Stachole was the same way, and it would be somebody like Stachole or Piazoni or Mrs. Albright that they all would look to. And they're not as volatile as I am. You'd never get a con- variation like this rambling sort of thing that I'm giving you. They would say nothing.

Piazoni would say very little. And he had quite a following.

Gilb: Tell me about Piazzoni. What did he look like?

Macky: He was a little fellow that looked something like Cezanne.
What else did he look like?

Mrs. M: Well, he always wore a black hat with a wide brim. A real Italian. Very lovable person.

Macky: He got up to give a lecture at the Palace of Fine Arts. And they had him standing all lonely up there. And all he could say was, "Art is heart." And I remember that more than all the other talks that had gone before or since.

Mrs. M: Great truth, too.

Macky: His works are very simple. They finally got him a commission to do some murals in the public library entrance in San Francisco (they're still there), very simple, stark lines. His influence was very much felt in teaching students. One or two words, that's all.

Mrs. M: There was one thing about him. He was a real Californian.

He was born in California. And lived in California. He wasn't an import.

Gilb: That was rare, wasn't it?

Mrs. M: Yes.

Macky: Had he never been to Europe?

Mrs. M: Yes, he'd been to Europe. But he belonged sort of to the soil. And so did Stackpole.

Macky: Stackpole was born here.

Gilb: Was Stackpole like Piazzoni, in type and manner?

Mrs. M: No. He was fair. Different. But the two of them were a great influence in art in San Francisco.

Macky: Both of them were just lovable people, but so confident.

Glib: Tell me about Lincoln. What did he look like?

Macy: He was a little fellow that looked something like Gessner.

What else did he look like?

Mrs. M: Well, he always wore a black hat with a wide brim. A real

Italian. Very lovable person.

Macy: He got up to give a lecture at the Palace of Fine Arts.

And they had him standing all homely up there. And all

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soil. And so did Stockpole.

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Glib: Was Stockpole like Lincoln, in type and manner?

Mrs. M: No. He was fair. Different. But the two of them were a

great influence in art in San Francisco.

Macy: Both of them were just lovable people, but so confident.

Mills: Can you tell us something about Armin Hansen?

Macky: I don't know his early life. I think he was born here and grew up here. He was of German descent, I think. (His father was a painter.) He went off to study in Europe, particularly in Holland, and he got interested in those rich dark Dutch pictures. And he loved to paint big simple strong things. He translated that into the lighter color of California, and his pictures were prophetic of something of the abstract that was to develop later (by the simplification of his shapes.) He made his particular living by a little teaching down there in Monterey. He always had a class. And he was very successful in selling his etchings. He was a very fine etcher. He was wise to get out of San Francisco, going down there, and somehow by hook or by crook he built a very beautiful home in Monterey. Enormous belief in himself! And with great ability.

Mrs. M: One year, he had the summer class for the artists' group of the art school in Monterey, you see. And a group of people went down there, and they formed around Armin Hansen. There were the Bruton Sisters, Lucy Pierce, Ina Perham and the Tufts and Barrows and Gay and Price. Price was one of his students.

Mills: I knew Price had been active down there, but I didn't know he'd been a student of Hansen's.

Macky: I wouldn't swear to that, either.

Mrs. M: No, but they were all together. Sort of, they talked together. And it was a wonderful time. We happened to

Mills: You were your closest friends among the artists?

Macky: Oh, Hamilton, Margaret and Marygold and all these good

people.

Wills: Can you tell us something about your father?

Wally: I don't know his early life. I think he was born here and

grew up here. He was of German descent, I think. (His

father was a painter.) He went off to study in Europe,

particularly in Holland, and he got interested in those

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Mrs. K: One year, he had the summer class for the artists' group

of the art school in Monterey, you see. And a group of

people went down there, and they formed around around

Hansen. There were the Norton Sisters, Lucy Pierce, the

Wentons and the Britts and Barrows and Gay and Price. Price

was one of his students.

Wills: I know Price had been native down there, but I didn't know

he'd been a student of Hansen's.

Wally: I wouldn't swear to that, either.

Mrs. W: No, but they were all together. Sort of, they talked

together. And it was a wonderful time. We happened to

- Mrs. M: go down there for part of it, on sort of the outside. They
- Macky: lived mostly in the Stevenson house; they had their studios
- Mrs. M: there. We were very fortunate that we had a little share in
- Macky: that. Fortune was quite a character down there in Monterey --
- Macky: There was a fellow down there that made frames -- Oliver.
- Mrs. M: Oliver also had a shop down there; you know, the art store.
- Macky: Gay made frames, too: good ones, handcarved.
- Mills: Did you know Gay?
- Macky: He was a former student of mine.
- Mills: Can you tell us anything about the Society of Six and their
- Gilb: work? Gile and Siegfried and Gay and Clapp and Logan.
- Macky: Well, then ask Logan, because I don't know. I probably
- Macky: knew there was a Society of Six, but that was on this side
- Macky: of the Bay. It was formed after I left here -- I left
- Oakland in 1911.
- Mills: It was formed about the time of the Fair and lasted up
- Mills: through 1925. Did you know Joe Rafael?
- Macky: I've met him. He spent most of his time in Holland, came
- Macky: back here just before he died. But his work was done
- Macky: mostly in Holland and done in the impressionistic style --
- Macky: color dabs.
- Mrs. M: Piazzoni and Joe Rafael and Stackpole. That was a trio.
- Mrs. M: When Joe Rafael came back here, he was more or less retired.
- Mrs. M: He was tired out and lived on his reputation. I wouldn't
- Macky: like to speak authoritatively on Joe Rafael. I know he was
- Macky: highly regarded here and much loved by the people who knew
- Macky: him.
- Gilb: Who were your closest friends among the artists?
- Macky: Oh, Randolph, Piazzoni and Stackpole and all these same
- Macky: people. Painted his landscapes at the Legion of Honor.

Mrs. M.: Go down there for part of it, on sort of the outside. They lived mostly in the Stevenson house; they had their studios there. We were very fortunate that we had a little share in that.

Macq.: There was a fellow down there that made frames -- Oliver.

Mrs. M.: Oliver also had a shop down there; you know, the art store.

Macq.: Gay made frames, too; good ones, hand-carved.

Hills: Did you know Gay?

Macq.: He was a former student of mine.

Hills: Can you tell us anything about the Society of Six and their work? Gile and Stearrest and Gay and Upp and Logan.

Macq.: Well, then ask Logan, because I don't know. I probably knew there was a Society of Six, but that was on this side of the Bay. It was formed after I left here -- I left Oakland in 1911.

Hills: It was formed about the time of the Fair and lasted up through 1925. Did you know Joe Rafael?

Macq.: I've met him. He spent most of his time in Holland, came back here just before he died. But his work was done mostly in Holland and done in the impressionistic style -- color tabs.

Mrs. M.: Pizzoni and Joe Rafael and Steadpole. That was a trio.

When Joe Rafael came back here, he was more or less retired. He was tired out and lived on his reputation. I wouldn't like to speak authoritatively on Joe Rafael. I know he was highly regarded here and much loved by the people who knew him.

Giff: Who were your closest friends among the artists?

Macq.: Oh, Randolph, Pizzoni and Steadpole and all these same people.

Mrs. M: Edgar Walter (the sculptor).

Macky: We were friends of them all. A grand group in those days.

Mrs. M: We have had a great many friends -- all the Art Association.

Macky: Effie Fortune was quite a character down there in Monterey -- we forgot to mention her. And a fellow named Bruce Nelson. Do you remember? I often wonder what became of him.

Mrs. M: Oh, he painted well, didn't he? ~~Artist: Don't talk much~~

Gilb: And after you joined you centered all your social activities around the Art Association, and all your creative work.

Macky: Oh, we were the Art Association -- our group.

Gilb: And if people would form little studios or little schools, you'd hear about them and sooner or later they'd get merged into the Art Association?

Macky: There were no other little schools that we were aware of. Just the Art Association.

You take Bob Howard. I used to teach him. I used to teach his wife, Adeline Kent, too, and many others. These people have all impinged upon our lives. We knew Arthur Mathews, formerly Dean of the Mark Hopkins Institute -- he was a very important figure, now almost forgotten. Stackpole and Piazzoni were pupils of his and very much influenced by him. He in turn was influenced by Whistler through his wife's having studied with him. And he also studied in Europe.

Mrs. M: I don't suppose the name of John Zeile has cropped up?

Macky: He was associated with Arthur Matthews, and I think F. H. Meyer in designing furniture in San Francisco before the fire.

One of the significant sculptors before my time here was Arthur Putnam; his sculptures are at the Legion of Honor.

Mrs. M: Edgar Walter (the sculptor).

Macky: We were friends of them all. A grand group in those days.

Mrs. M: We have had a great many friends -- all the Art Association.

Macky: Effie Fortune was quite a character down there in Monterey --

we forgot to mention her. And a fellow named Bruce Nelson.

Do you remember? I often wonder what became of him.

Mrs. M: Oh, he painted well, didn't he?

Gill: And after you joined you centered all your social activities

around the Art Association, and all your creative work.

Macky: Oh, we were the Art Association -- our group.

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Arthur Forman; his sculptures are at the Legion of Honor.

Macky: I knew him in Paris.

Gilb: Were your friends also musicians and writers or were they mostly artists?

Macky: Mostly painters and sculptors, etc. We'd meet musicians and writers, but musicians are awful dumb. They don't -- they can't talk to you. Perhaps we are the dumb ones? You know,

Gilb: Of course, you've told us that artists don't talk much either, and come to my studio. I had no idea. They didn't

Macky: They're more voluble than musicians.

Mills: I think that's true. And when they'd go back to San Francisco and say "We want that young fellow in Oakland to come over and teach." Captain Fletcher was the Director at the time. He knew me. He said, "Oh, he's too young." (I was young like you are, and I had a mop of curly dark hair, and rosy cheeks.) And he said, "Oh, he's too young and he couldn't keep discipline." So they quietly engaged a studio at the top of the Crocker Bank, corner of Post and Market, and they organized a group, and they asked me to come over and teach. That went along for quite a while, and then they began to break up, and then I began to carry it as a school of my own after that. Then I moved down to Sacramento street and for five years we carried on a school. Quite a story. There were some very interesting people who came there. The leader seemed to be (and later) Stafford-Burch who became a well known figure for several years thereafter. Harry Haina was another - James Jasin, Elizabeth Hefere, William Creed and many others who are well known today. I wish I had kept

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Gill: Of course, you've told us that artists don't talk much

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Kacik: They're more verbose than musicians.

Hilla: I think that's true.

Macky: MACKY JOINS FACULTY OF THE CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS, 1917.

Macky: I started out in Oakland when I first came to the Bay region. At the Albany Building, it was called in those days. These fellows used to come across from San Francisco, you know, these art students, from the Institute of Art, these rough diamonds, and come to my studio. I had no idea. They didn't ask my permission. They'd turn the canvasses around and looked around everywhere. And then they'd go back to San Francisco and say "We want that young fellow in Oakland to come over and teach." Captain Fletcher was the Director at the time. He knew me. He said, "Oh, he's too young." (I was young like you are, and I had a mop of curly dark hair, and rosy cheeks.) And he said, "Oh, he's too young and he couldn't keep discipline." So they quietly engaged a studio at the top of the Crocker bank, corner of Post and Market, and they organized a group, and they asked me to come over and teach them. That went along for quite a while, and then they began to break up, and then I began to carry it on as a school of my own after that. Then I moved down to Sacramento street and for five years we carried on a school. Quite a story. There were some very interesting people who came there. The leader seemed to be (the late) Stafford-Duncan who became a pupil of mine for several years thereafter. Henry Heine was another - Louise Janin, Hildreth Meiere, William Creed and many others who are well known today. I wish I had kept

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Macky: a list of them all. I had the most difficult people, in this world to teach. It would require the patience of Job to teach some of these perfect nuts that would come in to an independent school like that.

In 1917, they came down from this new organization. They knew I had all the students, and they had the building. So I went up there and 70 students went up. And I didn't ask them once. I simply said, "I'm going to the Art Association." I didn't say, "Won't you follow me," or anything like that. I didn't say anything. And to my surprise I found they were all up there.

From that time, the school on the hill began to grow. I wasn't the Director. Lee F. Randolph was the Director, and don't forget him, because Lee Randolph was a very important person in this whole art teaching world. And the poor fellow is retired now and in very poor health. He was a colleague of mine, and I fell awfully sorry about it. He has heart trouble, is in bed, and living on, well, I think a bit of a pension I think he's been able to get finally. He's living in Carmel. A long story about Randolph. He did some wonderful teaching. Well, he and I worked together up there.

First of all, Leo Lentelli was the Dean of the Faculty and then he went off to New York. He was one of the big dynamic sculptors of the 1915 Exposition. It was fine flashy sculpture, lots of energy. And then I became the Dean of the Faculty from that time on, very shortly after

Faculty:

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Macky: 1917. Randolph and I worked together as a team. He was the Director. We built that school up, and one year we had 900 students enrolled. Built it up from practically nothing. There's a long story about all the activities that have gone on in that school. It has been a wonderful school. From time to time we sent our drawings in competition to the East to the Art Students' League, and we often won the national prizes in drawing. Heavens alive, our students were good at drawing. Good school of drawing and painting -- and design -- and sculpture. Good sculpture under Stackpole. And good design under Marion Hartwell and others. And good painting under Lee Randolph and myself, and Constance Macky and Gertrude Partington Albright and for awhile, Henry Varnum Poor who taught still-life painting.

Bufano has taught Sculpture there besides Stackpole. There was a very fine faculty; that's what makes a good school!

Gilb: In 1917, what did you teach -- you didn't have still life before that time?

Mrs. M: Not before then, no.

Mills: Was that an influence of the French groups that were doing still life at that time?

Macky: I think we studied that way in Australia, when we studied in the school out there; and we found they didn't teach it here and they didn't seem to teach it in France.

Mills: Well, you know, a great many of the European things were still-life.

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- Macky: Oh, yes, I know. There were lots of still-lives in painting. But I mean as a regular art school diet...
- Gilb: Mrs. Macky was the one who brought it in?
- Macky: Well, she was. Because I can remember Mr. Randolph and I saying, "Well, all right, if you want to teach it, you can teach it." She said, "I don't see how you can teach them to paint if they can't paint still-life." And for years and years she taught them that subject, besides teaching life painting and all that sort of thing. And later on, Oldfield came into the picture. He was quite an influence. I can tell you about him some day.
- Gilb: Yes. We'd like to hear about him.
- Macky: Well now, the year he came here I don't remember. Don't ask me dates. That can be checked on. But after he'd been in Europe -- he was an old student, first of all, of the school here and he studied with Arthur Best -- but he was always ambitious to get to Europe, and he studied over there for 18 years.
- Gilb: Lived where?
- Macky: In Paris, Montmartre. And when he came back again, after the first world war, his wife had died (he'd married over there and he seemed to be a lost soul). He arrived back here with a bell-top hat on, a frock coat and cane, and he could hardly speak any English and I had to talk to him in French for quite awhile. He was a perfect little character, you know. And he began to teach. (Laughter)
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 I mean to say, he started in Sacramento where he was born.
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 And he was poor. And he didn't know what to do. Some woman
 said to him, "Now, Otis, come on in and talk to the students."
 who had some money said, "I'd like you to teach me painting."
 So he was this high (gesture low to ground), and I was this
 And he said, "Can you draw?" She couldn't draw a straight
 high (gesture much higher). (Laughter) I said, "Now, tell
 line. Well, he said, "Can you draw three lines and make a
 us. You've come back from France. What is all this I hear
 triangle?" And she said, "Yes." So he said, "Well, do that
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 fill that triangle with color carefully. "Now," he said,
 to draw a few lines this way and a few lines that way.
 "Fill another one of another shape and color and another and
 which made an arabesque. And he said, "All you do --
 another and another all joined together. Keep on doing that."
 It's just like the tiles on the floor -- you just fill it in
 And he was able to teach her to put some colors together and
 this way and that way, that's the basis of it all. Just
 keep on mixing these colors on the paper or on the canvas
 divide it up into shapes, you see." Overlapping, sometimes,
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 And the philosophy grew into the most profound thing in the

So he came down to San Francisco. And I discovered him
 teaching a little group on Montgomery street, there. And
 they were all enthusiastic, a little private group. And --
 I got to know him, you know, and this was very interesting,
 I thought. And much to the objection of the hierarchy of
 the school up there (they said, "We don't want him up here")
 I said, "Yes, I do. I want him to come up and teach them how
 to do those simple things." And for years, he came up there
 and he was my drillmaster. I had him drill the students in
 And after awhile, I said, "Now I want you to make use
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 and just tell what this is all about." So in 1940, I mean
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And after awhile, I said, "Now I must go back to France myself and find out what this is all about." So in 1926, I went over again.

Gilb: Did you go with him, Mrs. Macky?

Macky: No, she didn't. She let me go loose. (Laughter) I worked hard to try to find out what it was all about, you see --

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Mackey: to see what all these people were talking about. There was a lot of jargon going on here. I mean, people were talking about it. Nothing was logical at all. So I went back, and I studied with L'Hote for awhile. And, my goodness, I was the forerunner of a whole crowd that went over to study with L'Hote. Not that I like his work very much, but he was very logical in the way he expressed things. And his ideas were flexible, and his interpretation of Cezanne was interesting, and so on. But you see what I mean. One could go on talking about these interludes that seem to permeate a society such as this one -- Otis Oldfield coming back, you know. Coming back again to an earlier period, there were these other migrants who had come back. Martinez had studied abroad and later on Arthur Mathews. I have a whole list of them here. They all went to Europe and came back again. We had the same thing, although we were not born here. We came here also from Europe.

Mrs. M: Has Ann Bremer been mentioned?

Mackey: No. There were lots of people.

Mrs. M: She was one of the most important people.

Gilb: And had she come also from Europe, or studied there?

Mackey: Oh, yes. She's got one of the few big L'Hotes that are out here. There's one out here that belongs to the museum, I think.

Gilb: You'd say, then, that most of the people who were in art here had at one time or another been in Europe to study?

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- Macky: come to think of it, most Americans have, in their history, if you look back. It is quite an exception when someone hasn't.
- Gilb: (Aside to Mills) That makes Siegfriest and the Society of Six a little different -- a little more regional.
- Mills: Yes, but their style was -- Clapp, who was one of the Society of Six, studied in England and studied in France before the first World War there. And Clapp started doing impressionist work in Canada and then went to France and was studying there, oh, I imagine in 1906 or 1910, somewhere along in there.
- Macky: I have a nice little painting at home done by Cuneo way back in 1916. And I have one done by myself along side of it at the same time. His is more impressionistic. He collaborated with Clarence Hinkle in doing some decorations for the Fair in 1915 all more or less in the style of the impressionistic pointellism, you know. Cuneo and I went out sketching together. Rinaldo Cuneo. Now, his brother was Cyrus Cuneo, famous illustrator on the Illustrated London News. Most brilliant chap.

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OTHER EARLY ART ASSOCIATIONS

Gilb: Were there any other art associations besides the San Francisco Art Association?

Macky: Con says I was talking to Arthur Mathews -- whoever it was, he said that the Sketch Club was founded by Miss Josephine Hyde, Miss Nellie Treat, Mrs. Goodloe, and Mrs. Mathews.

(Mathews used to work for Britten and Ray, the historical firm of lithographers.)

In 1884 the Palette Club was the first breakaway. I guess Arthur Mathews told me that. It gave one exhibition.

Mathews was 22 years old, working independently. And Yeats -- you've heard of Yeats?

Mills: No. I haven't.

Macky: Well, Yeats is one of the characters you've got to look up. He had a life class in 1883. Fred Yeats, it was. He got pupils out of school, boys and girls, working together. Formerly they used to be separate -- boys' life class and girls' life class. And it was organized by a group of students, Miss McChesney, daughter of a former teacher in Oakland, and a number of others. Half day, school; half day, Yeats. Theodore Wores was to teach there about one year. And then he went over to Europe. And Mathews was running the night class. Charlie Dickman and Mathews both went off to Europe later on.

The students revolted and started another thing called the Art Students League, in 1883.

Mathews became the head of this art school. And I think

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year. And then he went over to Europe. And Matthews was

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went off to Europe later on.

The students revolted and started another thing called the

Art Students League, in 1883.

Matthews became the head of this art school. And I think

Macky: I probably had the same title he had. He wasn't called
 Gilb: director, you see, he was dean. And I was dean of the
 faculty in the California School of Fine Arts. When I used
 Macky: to talk to him, I never dreamed I'd be in the same position
 that he was. He was a great figure here and had a great
 influence on the painters of that time and the young people.

Mrs. M: May I say something now? You mentioned the beginning of
 the Sketch Club. The Sketch Club was formed, and it was the
 beginning of what is now the San Francisco Society of Women
 Artists. Arthur Mathews had been the instructor, and he
 was the only man in the whole thing. It was a woman's club,
 I believe. Then when the Art Association sort of reformed
 (1917) the Sketch Club sold out everything they had and
 joined the Art Association. Then, they became a little
 disgruntled, because they got their pictures thrown out of
 the shows and there were not enough social things. And so
 the women decided that they would form again, and they did
 as the San Francisco Society of Women Artists.

Gilb: Were you in that group?

Mrs. M: Yes, I was one of the charter members.

Gilb: Why do you think the women's pictures weren't taken, because
 they weren't good enough or because women painted them?

Mrs. M: At that time it was exactly the same as it is now. Things
 were progressing, and they weren't quite good enough.
 They were not keeping up with the times. But there were
 some people in that group who were very progressive.
 Helen Forbes and Amy Fleming -- they were very inclined to
 be modern, and they kept the standard up of the women

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Mrs. M: artists. So that's why they are as they are now.

Gilb: Which is good?

Mills: Yes, it is good.

Macky: Robert B. Harshe, who eventually became the Director of the Chicago Art Institute, started his career at Stanford University as Professor of Art there, and he became assistant director to Trask at the 1915 Exposition. (J. Nilsen Laurvik took over after they left.) In his spare time he put in a tremendous amount of effort into this young group of the California Society of Etchers. Now, I don't think he actually organized it; I think it was already in existence.

Gilb: It was organized in 1913.

Macky: It had been in existence, then. I was under the impression that I was the first secretary. I should have been an etcher, because I just love etching and drawing. But I didn't. I didn't do much etching. I told you that incident where Harshe was having a reception downstairs in the Studio Building, and Mrs. Macky and I lived on top, you know. We had a big suite up on top there. And I said, "Come on upstairs and we can have some tea." And he said, "No." He wanted to stay right down where the people were because he wanted to propagate and propagandize this etching society. He had more go than I did. I didn't care so much about politics. He was a born artist-politician. I wasn't. I'm not a politician, although I've been in on a lot of these things. I'm not a politician in art.

Gilb: Is that Etching Society still in existence?

Macky: Decidedly yes.

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Is that Etching Society still in existence?
Decidedly yes.

Mills: Is it known as the Society of Etchers or the Society of Printmakers?

Macky: Society of Etchers. And I think Nicholas Dunphy is the president of it now, or else the secretary, and he's been secretary or president for many years. He could give you a lot on the Society of Etchers. They've had some very fine shows.

Mills: Oh, Nicholas Dunphy. He lives in San Francisco.

Macky: He's an old student of mine. I used to teach him drawing and painting. Strange thing. When the amalgamation took place, when the Sketch Club was a separate organization, Con was the Secretary of it (not that she engineered it, but she happened to have the title of Secretary) and Arthur Mathews was President. McComas had some connection with it, too. And what money they had left over, they bought a picture by Childe Hassam, that picture of a girl on a bridge which is in the San Francisco Museum.

Mrs. M: With all the money that they had, they bought this picture of Childe Hassam's that had been out in the 1915 Fair and presented it to the Art Association. So they had no funds left, but they started up again. Anne Bremer wanted them to buy a Gauguin, but they wouldn't. And they could have had a Gauguin at that time for \$400.00, the amount they paid for the Hassam.

Mills: She was responsible for a lot of the early selections of the San Francisco Art Association at the Museum.

Mrs. M: Yes. Oh, yes. She was Albert Bender's cousin, you know.

Mills: Is it known as the Society of Scholars or the Society of Printmakers?

Macy: Society of Scholars. And I think Nicholas Murphy is the president of it now, or was the secretary, and he's been secretary or president for many years. He could give you a lot on the Society of Scholars. They've had some very fine shows.

Mills: Oh, Nicholas Murphy. He lives in San Francisco.

Macy: He's an old student of mine. I used to teach him drawing and painting.

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Mackey: ART PATRONS: BENDER, WOOD, CROCKER, PORTER.

Gilb: Oh, will you tell us something about Bender? Who was he, and what did he do for the Bay Area, in the field of art?

Mrs. M: That's sort of a large order.

Gilb: (Laughing) In ten words.

Mackey: Well, that's something we can tell you.

Gilb: When did you first meet Bender?

Mrs. M: It was very simple. When we came to California, we were married (1912), and we were looking for a studio. And Anne Bremer had come here, and she was having an old building made over into studio apartments. We joined in on this project, you see. We had a very nice place with a couple of studios, and Anne Bremer had her studio and her apartment and Albert Bender had his library in the same building. So that we all started together in the Studio Building on Post Street. We were the first people in there.

Gilb: Was that after you came to Oakland?

Mrs. M: Yes, after. When we started in San Francisco.

Mackey: We could tell you a lot about that. But that would take still another afternoon!

Mrs. M: Albert Bender was devoted to his cousin, and he gave everything he had to art -- and to literature. He was very fond of books too.

Gilb: What sorts of things did he collect?

Mrs. M: Oh, he gave everything away. He bought local artists work - he had many Bufanos, I remember.

Mackey: He was the victim of all kinds of salesmen. He bought

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Mackay: He was the victim of all kinds of salesmen. He bought

Macky: lots of spurious art, and some good art, and as much as he could get for nothing, cheap, and get the artists to give things and ...

Mills: There's a big Bender collection, now.

Macky: Well, I'll tell you honestly, Albert Bender was so devoted to his cousin who died, Anne Bremer, that on the day of her funeral he decided to devote the rest of his life in her memory. And so he established this -- I think Lee Randolph had a lot to do with persuading him, although we all worked on that because we were very intimate friends. Then whenever he'd get a chance to establish an Anne Bremer Library, an Anne Bremer Memorial, Anne Bremer this, or the Bender Library (it was all mixed up), he got them to see the vision of getting other people to give money and have his name tacked on to it, if possible. You know, he was pretty smart. I mean, he'd get you to give a picture, and he'd call it the Anne Bremer Memorial. I don't want to take away from his glory, but you know what I mean, he worked the angles too.

Mrs. M: He did. He did a great deal.

Macky: Oh, yes. He'd get you to give etchings, anything you wanted ...

Gilb: As long as you called it "Anne Bremer".

Macky: Well, he did. In the new building of ours over there, our library there, he managed to wangle it so it is called the Anne Bremer Library now, if you please.

Mrs. M: He didn't give all the books, you know.

Gilb: We all have our weaknesses. (Laughing)

Macky: At least he did something, anyway.

Mrs. M: He was a stockbroker, wasn't he?

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Mrs. M: He was a stockbroker, wasn't he?

Macky: Insurance.

Gilb: Were there any other men like him, who fostered art and helped it?

Macky: Not like he did, no. He was a regular busybody. My goodness, he'd get in ...

Mrs. M: He was wonderful.

Macky: We all liked him. What a story you could tell about him. You know, so many things have happened that you don't know where to begin.

Mrs. M: I think for years he kept Bennie Bufano. He just kept him alive.

Macky: Oh, he's helped many of them out. Many, many a thing he's done. You'd go to his office -- "Here take this," and he'd give you a ring. He was always giving something away, you know.

Gilb: He didn't care what style they painted or anything, as long as they were sincere artists?

Macky: Oh, he kept his ear to the ground and had good advice. If he thought Orozco was good, he'd buy up some Orozco drawings. If Diego Rivera was -- no, he wasn't here then, that was Gerstle. Whatever was going, he had his ear to the ground. He had pretty good taste, good judgment, but he was more a -- he knew what was the thing to do, you see. He had good advice.

Gilb: I was talking to Mrs. Charles Erskine Wood last Monday, and her husband bought a lot of paintings -- did you know him, did you know Erskine Wood?

Mrs. M: Oh yes.

Mackay: Insurance.

Gill: Were there any other men like him, who fostered and helped it?

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Gill: I was talking to Mrs. Charles Elaine Wood last Monday, and her husband bought a lot of paintings -- did you know him, did you know Elaine Wood?

Mrs. M: Oh yes.

Mills: bought.

Gilb: What kind of things did he buy?

Macky: Well, he was tipped on Martines.

Mrs. M: Ray Boynton.

Mrs. M: Mrs. Dick Partington might be able to tell you. She was a

Gilb: And do you know any other people around here who've been
 Haven, you know, one of the Havens.
 buyers of art and encouraged it in that way?

Macky: Oh, the Crockers used to. Templeton Crocker used to buy
 things, but then he got sour on it all. Ansley Salz bought
 many Piazzonis.

Mrs. M: How about Dr. Porter?

Macky: Dr. Porter used to, yes, before my time.

Mills: Could you tell me a little bit about Dr. Porter, what your
 knowledge of him was here?

Macky: He came from near Melbourne, in Australia.

Mills: Oh, really? I knew he was an Australian. Tell me about
 that? I'm very interested.

Mrs. M: I didn't know him in Australia, but I knew him here.

Gilb: What was his occupation, physician?

Macky: Oh, yes. And he was a very eminent one, too.

Mrs. M: I came from Melbourne, and I didn't know him there.

Macky: But we made a sort of a friendship when we were here because
 he was from Australia.

Mills: When did you first meet him?

Macky: Pretty soon after I first came here, 1912, say.

Mrs. M: Then of course he was a great friend of the Partingtons.

Macky: He was very much interested in the College of Arts and Crafts;
 he was on the board of trustees. Oh, yes, I think he was
 the President of the Board there at one time.

Mills: We have the Partington portrait of Dr. Porter. It would
 be very interesting to know some of the painters that he

Gibb: What kind of things did he buy?

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Macky: Well, he was hipped on Martinez.

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Mrs. M: Mrs. Dick Partington might be able to tell you. She was a
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affiliation between the Art Association and the University is

basically one of trusteeship, not so much from the academic

standpoint as from the physical side. There was some

provision that if for any reason, art classes were not held

in the property of the San Francisco Art Association for

one year, the property would revert to the University of

California. So you see they should be right to keep their

classes over there, even if they go bankrupt. Otherwise

the property reverts to the University of California.

I don't know whether it's going off the deep end or not, but

I know that there was the fire. Then, they used to hold

their life classes down in the old garage, the old stables

which are still on the Mack Hopkins hotel property. Most

people don't know that. That was where the life classes

used to be. Then on the engine they put up a sort of

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rightly I was asked to join the Board of Fire Arts in 1911

after it had burnt down the next again. And I remember very

distinctly that the buildings were not adequate for the

purpose. I don't know the exact year, it must have been

around 1911 or '12. I was on the Board of Directors with

Willa: bought.

Marcy: Well, he was ripped on Martins.

Mrs. M: Mrs. Dick Partington might be able to tell you. She was a

Haven, you know, one of the Ravens.

BUILDING PROGRAM, CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

Macky: Completion Crocker, you know, and Walter Martin, and

Macky: When the fire came in 1906, the old Mark Hopkins mansion was destroyed. It was bequeathed to the San Francisco Art Association in the trust of the University of California; the affiliation between the Art Association and the University is largely one of trusteeship, not so much from the academic standpoint as from the physical side. There was some proviso that if for any reason, art classes were not held in the property of the San Francisco Art Association for one year, the property would revert to the University of California. So you see they should be rights keep up their classes over there, even if they go bankrupt. Otherwise the property reverts to the University of California.

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Macky: Templeton Crocker, you know, and Walter Martin, and Lawrence Scott, Arthur Brown, and others, besides Piazzoni and Edgar Walter, Willis Polk, who represented the artists. I remember suggesting to them one day that they should sell the building and find a site that would be more suitable for an art school because the light from the Fairmont Hotel shone in there so strongly in the afternoons that you just couldn't paint, along that whole facade there, it was just impossible.

In that regard, I remember we had several meetings of the Board, and began to discuss the possibility of doing something with the property. First I had a brilliant idea, and I talked to Willis Polk, the architect, about it, who was also on the Board. And I said to him, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could put a building up here, a hotel, and have an art school on the top? Wouldn't it be grand if we had an art school where -- what do you call that thing on top of there now?"

Mills: Oh, the --

Gilb: Top of the Mark.

Macky: Top of the Mark. I said, "Now look, here we could advertise an art school, finest view in the whole world from the top of this hotel. Well, Templeton Crocker was sitting across the table from me, and Templeton said, "Well, Spencer," he said, "Who's going to run it?" "Oh," I said, "I don't know about running it. You ought to know about that." I

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Macky: didn't say that he owned the St. Francis Hotel, I didn't imply that part of it, I didn't mean the running of the hotel. Because my idea was, which I pictured to them, here would be a wonderful income-producing property, and the proceeds would go to maintain the finest of art schools, the highest of high standards, because in those days the name of the school had been changed to the California School of Fine Arts, which emphasized and proclaimed the idea that the school should stand only for the fine arts. They were against crafts and commercial art and all these lowly arts. They only wanted to have the fine arts: painting, sculpture, the finest kind of industrial design, furniture design, whatever came in the realm of fine arts. So they changed the name, and with high ideals they set forth to change the world, you see, and I joined them at that particular period. I wasn't so particularly crusader-like as to want to change the world myself, because I knew that's a long story, but I did think there was a big opportunity for them to have a school that would be self-supporting and therefore have the very best of faculty and best of appointments and the most inspiring view of the world. Even Willis Polk drew the plans, but they turned it down, didn't know how to finance it.

Well, the next thing was they said, "Oh well, we'll go ahead and sell the property then." I was on the Buildings and Grounds Committee, and they soon came up with propositions about selling it. Somebody came along with a proposition of about \$175,000, and the Board was going to sell it for that. We said, "No, we certainly won't sell it for \$175,000. It's

Wesley:

didn't say that he owned the St. Francis Hotel, I didn't imply that part of it, I didn't mean the running of the hotel. Because my idea was, which I pictured to them, here would be a wonderful income-producing property, and the proceeds would go to maintain the finest of art schools, the highest of high standards, because in those days the name of the school had been changed to the California School of Fine Arts, which emphasized and proclaimed the idea that the school should stand only for the fine arts. They were against crafts and commercial art and all these lowly arts. They only wanted to have the fine arts: painting, sculpture, the finest kind of industrial design, furniture design, whatever came in the realm of fine arts. So they changed the name, and with high ideals they set forth to change the world, you see, and I joined them at that particular period. I wasn't so particularly crusader-like as to want to change the world myself, because I knew that's a long story, but I did think there was a big opportunity for them to have a school that would be self-supporting and therefore have the very best of faculty and best of appointments and the most inspiring view of the world. Even Willis Folk drew the plans, but they turned it down, didn't know how to finance it.

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Mackay: worth much more than that." And I worked enough opposition to stop them from selling it. I think a little later -- I think the next thing was \$225,000. I said, "No, that's not enough." I was a bit of a leader in those days. I said, "No, you can't sell it for that. This property's worth more than that. It's worth nearer \$300,000." Well, as a matter of fact, finally they sold it for approximately \$275,000. And they say artists haven't any business sense!

(Laughter)

That. You guard that with your life because it tells the Being on the Buildings and Grounds Committee, I looked all over the city for a site for a school, and finally got a site up there opposite Mrs. Spreckels' home. There is a park there in the middle of San Francisco. But somebody got wind of it, and bought the only property giving ingress. It was one of these early land grants, you know, that had no ingress or exit to the outside world. And so the Board just turned it down, would not consummate the deal. And so I went on looking further, and finally we got that site on Russian Hill where we are now, and we got that for \$50,000, pretty near a whole city block, not quite, but it was a very fine property, where we built the present California School of Fine Arts building - opening in 1926.

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Macky: MACKY FORMS THE ARTISTS' COUNCIL AND PROPOSES THE WAR MEMORIAL

Macky: I started the Artists' Council of the San Francisco Art Association. I was the chairman for the first five years.

Gilb: When was that?

Macky: Well, the exact date is kept in the minutes of the Artists' Council, but I think it was 1918 or 1919. When I left the Art Association in 1944, I gave Miss Sullivan the book of minutes. Jokingly I said, "Now, Miss Sullivan, you keep that. You guard that with your life because it tells the exact story written down in the minutes, of the beginning of the War Memorial." I said, "They'll deny it some day. This contains the exact facts." I was the one who proposed a War Memorial, and I called the very first Civic meeting for the purpose. I called a meeting at Tate's Cafe and invited every musician, painter, writer, sculptor, anyone who had anything to do with arts, to a big luncheon one day. I got up and made a little speech. I parodied that phrase, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune." I just changed it around, "-- in the affairs of a city which taken at the flood leads on to fortune." I said, "Now, we have the opportunity, in the upsurge of enthusiasm at the ending of this great war of 1918, of directing the thoughts of the people toward peace rather than toward war by erecting some huge ugly monument, which was done all over the world." I said, "We should have something to signify the arts. We should

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"We should have something to signify the arts. We should

Macky: have a fine Art Gallery, and buildings and having to do with music and literature and all that sort of thing." And they passed a resolution that day, saying that that should be so and that the Art Association should take it in hand. They carried it on for several years.

We threw all our funds into it, from the Art Association, and for a long time we were going to incorporate the school with the war memorial buildings. That was the idea. Then I remember John I. Walter coming to me and saying, "Spencer, I don't think you should have a Class A. building for an art school. We can buy you a place out on Fulton Street." And he drew me a sort of a igloo kind of thing. And I said, "Nothing doing." I said, "If we can't get in on the ground floor, we'll get out of it again." We pulled out. But the Art Association carried on. Then, in came the Musical Association with the idea of the opera house. And then came the necessity for more funds, and the political aspect came in where the veterans came in on it. They said, "Well, after all the war was won by us, and we should have something to say with this." And so they had a bond issue which added more funds and made it possible to build the Art Gallery side of it, and we were allowed to have the top floor. Arthur Brown was the architect. I had a lot to do with that. I was on the committee for all that sort of thing.

It was originally my idea. I don't want to take any credit for it, but as a matter of fact, I was there on the spot and

MacKey:

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I don't think you should have a Class A building for an art school. We can buy you a place out on Fifteen Street."

And he drew me a sort of a floor plan of things. And I said, "Nothing doing." I said, "If we can't get in on the ground floor, we'll get out of it again." We pulled out.

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- Macky: I was chairman of the Artists' Council, which had been running for several years.
- Gilb: Was the Artists' Council organized expressly for the War Memorial building?
- Macky: Oh, no. Oh, no. That was just one of its many functions.
- Gilb: What were the other functions?
- Macky: I was on the Board of Directors of the Art Association, and I remember saying to John I. Walter, "John, there should be some organization of artists in the Art Association that would take care of all the artists' affairs and exhibitions." And originally it was called -- well, I called it the Artists' Council. Then, someone said, "Oh, now you're trying to make it a sort of an executive thing -- Artists' Council." For a while then we changed the name, we called it the Council of Exhibitions and Artists' Affairs. Well, that was an awful long name. Finally, we moved it back to the name, which we gave it originally, "Artists' Council."
- At those meetings, we used to have all the artists come. They were well attended. That went along for five years. Then I thought I would be a little bit modest and retire and I let Edgar Walter take it over. And Edgar Walter was the chairman for the next five years. And he was a very fine dynamic person, with money in his own right. He was the brother of John I. Walter. He'd had much experience in Europe, and had been a student all his life. He never had to work for a living. And he did a great deal of sculpture. He did a great deal of sculpture for the Exposition, for

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to work for a living. And he did a great deal of sculpture. He did a great deal of sculpture for the Exposition, for

Macky: example. And he did sculptures for the City Hall and all that proscenium arch in the Opera House, those horses there, good or bad, he did it. And, oh, the School of Fine Arts, the little sculpture that goes over the top of the entrance, he did that one, too. He was a good sculptor, of that type, of that day, you see. So he became the chairman.

Then politics began to get into the S. F. Art Association. They wanted to change things around, and people over at the University wanted to change the rules about electing the officers of the Artists' Council. They used to have meetings down at cafes, and they'd come up and stuff the meetings and elect their own juries and began to change things around, and that's the way it is today. And not so long ago I went to the annual meeting -- and Mr. Swift, the president, said, "Anybody got anything to say?" Well, I said, "I don't suppose I'll ever be in this building again. I was associated with this for so many years. But I happen to be here tonight, and you're telling us that you can't get artists to pay their dues." And I said, "Now, how do you expect artists to pay their dues when they have legislation without representation?" I said, "There's a little group here now that runs the Artists' Council which is a sort of a Star Chamber." I said, "Do you know what a Star Chamber is?" You know, that group that used to run the government in England under Charles II; they met where there were stars on the ceiling so it was called the Star Chamber.

Gilb: Betcha nobody else knew that.

Macry:

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Before nobody else knew that.

Edith:

Macky: I don't know. I use those allusions, and perhaps quite often they don't mean anything. I'd have to explain them perhaps a little bit. But I said, "Woe betide anyone nowadays who sends a picture to an exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association who does not conform to the ideals of the jury, which is more or less elected by nomination from that inner group of the Star Chamber." I said, "It reminds me of the recent war we've been through where Hitler thought that the German people could not be well enough informed in that country; there must have to be a little elite group to tell the people what they should think." And I said, "We've had the same thing in Russia." And I said, "You've got the same thing in art right here in San Francisco. You have been pushing this kind of art along, and woe betide anyone who paints anything that does not conform to what the little jury of people who are the self-appointed mentors for the arts say. "Like it or not," I said, "Whatever it is, it isn't democracy, anyway."

Gilb: What kind of art do they promote?

Macky: Nonobjective. Well that's all right. I don't object to it myself. But what I object to is that there's no catholicity, there's no breadth of expression in an exhibition of paintings today. It has to conform to a little group of people who -- the intelligentsia, however you pronounce that word, who know what art is, and the others don't know, that's all there is to it. All right, they got control of the San Francisco Art Association, and then they finally got control of the school, and they have run it into the earth. I got out because they asked me to come over here

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Macky: to run this school in Oakland. I've never had any trouble myself because I've always had successful classes. All my life, I've always had big classes. When I left over there, I had big classes. But I think they were glad to get rid of me.

Gilb: When did they start getting control?

Macky: Well, I don't remember the exact date, but I said, "I remember the day when this very room here, when this room was full of artists and nominations for the juries were made from the floor." You see. "Now", I said, "You don't make the nominations from the floor." Perhaps it's a good thing, mind you, but nevertheless it has given the opportunity for a particular expression in art to become very dominant in San Francisco, in the San Francisco Art Association. I will say I think it has opened up a wide -- not a very wide, but a certain phase of expression. It's a pity to have to drive these people out to join the Western Art Association, I think they call themselves.

Mills: May we go back to one little thing here that may be clear to most people, but isn't to me; what exactly was and is the relationship between the Artists' Council and the San Francisco Art Association?

Macky: Oh, the Artists' Council is now a little group within the Art Association. The Artists of the Art Association have a group which they elect, called the Artists' Council.

Gilb: Oh, there are other groups? So this just represents the artists.

Macky: Yes. Of course there is the regular membership. Amazing

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Macky: thing, that little thing that started so small has become a name which seems to be recognized today and which has potentially a great deal of influence and did have all down through the years. It was the forum for the discussion of art. We used to have architects there, too. Architects came and artists and musicians, too, sometimes. We all had a grand time there talking about things. But soon as you get it run by a clique, then it has its good points because you can foster the kind of thing you think is good and you know that everybody else is wrong.

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[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to fading and bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a continuation of the conversation.]

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 THE WORLD OF MODERN ART
 a great base for the future development out of which our

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If you go to an exhibition today in San Francisco at the Art Association, you can go round that whole exhibition and find not one painting that looks like anything in nature. Now, this is very significant. There was a time in Paris, I remember, when you could go around the whole of the Grand Salon, hundreds and thousands of paintings, and every picture represented something. Now there's a vast change taken place in the world today. And I will say that it's a very provocative and very healthy thing and exciting to me, and I am amazed at the ingenuity of young people who are not handicapped with the dicta of a thorough training, the ingenuity of these young people to invent all kinds of things which would never have otherwise been made possible at all. As I told you the other day, they couldn't have got through the eye of the needle to begin with, to get into the promised land of painting, because in the first place they couldn't draw. Now that was the proviso first, that you must be able to draw. If you can't draw, you can't paint. There you are. It would kill them right off.

that greater door of opportunity was opened to them.
 The criticism in Europe was not to encourage young people; they said there were far too many artists anyway so the criticisms in the schools were very severe. Now, I come to this country. I find that all the teachers are very encouraging, helping everybody. They don't say, how good is the work? They say, how big are your classes? How many students have you got? You see what I mean? The net result is today

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come growth in the arts, because the kids in the high
schools, the kids in the kindergarten, your children, your
grandchildren, everybody's painting today. There's more
making of art materials for schools and painters and so on
than ever in history. It's one of the big industries in
America today. There are 200,000 students in art schools
in America today!

Gilb: Wasn't that way forty years ago.

Macky: Oh, no. It's a tremendous thing that's grown. Who am I to
say that you shouldn't do this and that you should go back
to the old again? You see, I mean it would be perfectly
silly. Look at this phenomenon and evaluate it if you can.
How did it come about? Well, it came about through the
development of expression. People are allowed to express
themselves. The exponents, the leading exponents of it all
may not have been very competent draftsmen, but they were
intelligent people and they were experimental people, and
this world of color and texture has been brought to our
attention. As soon as it is made possible for one to say
that drawing does not of necessity have to be accurate, it
can be a little bit out such as we discover in the early
primitives, as we're discovering in Rembrandt, as we
discover here and there down through the ages in Greece or
in Egypt -- as soon as you can make eyes twice as big and
mouths half as big, heads large and bodies small, if that
is permitted, then the sky is the limit and there's no
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that we have a widespread of interest in art which is forming a great base for the future development out of which can come growth in the arts, because the kids in the high schools, the kids in the kindergarten, your children, your grandchildren, everybody's painting today. There's more training of art materials for schools and painters and so on than ever in history. It's one of the big industries in America today. There are 200,000 students in art schools in America today!

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Macgy:

Macky: Always that, how the question is, what is to be the dis-
 Macky: And yet, like someone crying in the wilderness I still
 maintain if ever there are new heights to be achieved in the
 arts, there must be, I think (I may be wrong), some basic
 foundation in visual perception of a scholarly nature to
 form the basis for drawing and understanding, to build on.

Gilb: What you want is a union of exuberance and discipline.

Macky: Yes, if you can get it.

Mills: What happens, you get shifts in approaches to painting. I
 think undoubtedly this period is characterized by many
 easy ways of painting. You can be a painter quicker and
 more easily with the styles that are present now than you
 could when realism demanded great skill.

Macky: Yes. Well there you take Modigliani alone, those sensuous
 things of his, you know, those nudes and so forth. Well,
 you don't tell me that they're accurate in drawing; they
 are more true than accurate. They have a certain sensuous
 expression. Well, all right, every Tom, Dick, and Harry
 says, "Then, all right, I don't have to be able to draw."
 Then they do sensuous expressions, but they are not as well
 informed as Modigliani, you see, and then the sky is the
 limit. I don't know -- Modigliani happened to be a genius
 that happened to be at that particular time, that happened
 to hit onto something that happened to be his own personal
 expression.

Mills: Well, don't you feel that painting of real quality is
 always something of a rarity, that no matter what style --
 say, a nonobjective style, which is easy to pick up in some
 ways -- the masterpieces, the great works, are still going
 to be rare.

And yet, like someone crying in the wilderness I still maintain if ever there are new heights to be achieved in the arts, there must be, I think (I may be wrong), some basic foundation in visual perception of a scholarly nature to form the basis for drawing and understanding, to build on.

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Well, don't you feel that painting of real quality is

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say, a nonobjective style, which is easy to pick up in some

ways -- the masterpieces, the great works, are still going

to be rare.

Macky: Always rare. Now the question is, who is to be the dis-
 criminating person to say which is good and which is bad.
 We've left it very largely to the -- Well, I don't know
 whether the critics are responsible. They do a very good
 job of reporting. But perhaps a man like Malraux we're
 looking for, men who really have insight. I'm always looking
 for someone who can really talk sense. I'm so tired of the
 acres and volumes of stuff that's been written about art,
 so platitudinous and so ambiguous and with such a verbiage
 and such a vocabulary they have today that I don't know how
 we can understand what they're talking about. Although if
 one were well educated, probably one could understand better.
 I can understand it pretty well.

But to me, all great painters I've ever met have been very
 simple people, and they look at things very simply, and
 their power -- And it goes back to these people I'm speaking
 about in San Francisco. I don't suppose Stackpole ever
 said much in his life except shrug his shoulders and
 "It's good." If Stack said it was good, it was good, that's
 all. He didn't have a long -- wouldn't write a newspaper
 article on why it was good. And Piazzoni was the same way.
 I said to Piazzoni one day, I said, "How do you teach your
 students?" He taught in our school over there. It was in
 a restaurant. Well, he took a piece of bread, and he put
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Reply:

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Macky: simple solution to all this profundity, and that's what we're searching for. It isn't such a terrifically profound thing. I think it's something like the kingdom of heaven where you have to be like a child to enter, whereas a very wise person can't enter in. I think we've been nauseated and surfeited with so much intellectuality and so much talk. I remember Piazzoni getting up to make a talk at the 1915 Exposition. There he was on the stage, and here were the people sitting in the audience. He didn't know what to say. He said, "Art is heart."

Gilb: And then he sat down?

Macky: He may have said a lot of other words, but he didn't know what to say, much. They stuck him up there because he was a well-known painter, Piazzoni. "Art is heart." It's love -- the reason why people, why Grandma Moses paints -- she just loves doing those things, I don't expect it's art, but she just loves it. Children love it. If it depended on a great deal of knowledge -- there has been a reaction against all dicta of the academy which was transplanted from Italy via Leonardo da Vinci, planted in the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, there -- all this knowledge of anatomy, of light and shade and dark and case shadows, all the things that we've learnt. Some fellow comes along, and he doesn't know much about that. And he just paints -- like Modigliani or even some of Derain's things. Derain used to be in school with me. He's quite well trained. The people who used to come to school there, they were just ordinary human beings.

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Macky: I'm sure Picasso is just an ordinary human being. I don't know that he's ever said many profound things in his life,

perhaps he has.

Mills: He's said some very ambiguous things, anyway.

Macky: I think it's just up to the imagination, and I don't know what it is that guides the imagination. It's a wonderful thing, you know, to be liberated therefore from all that that used to dominate the teaching of art, to release a person and give them that thought of freedom, of expression having due respect for their own emotions and translating that into the terms of drawing and painting.

We try to teach that today, but oh it is so difficult to get teachers to teach art. It's just impossible.

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[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible, appearing to be a continuation of the conversation.]

SOME NEW ART ASSOCIATIONS

- Gilb: Do you know of any other current art associations, Paul, that should be mentioned?
- Mills: Well, you haven't said much about the Society of Western Artists.
- Macky: That was a society I never wanted to associate myself with because they called themselves the "Sanity in Art" and I didn't like the name.
- Mills: You might tell us some of your viewpoints on it.
- Macky: The Society of Western Artists consists of those artists who are reactionaries against anything that's modern. They are standpatters for painting realistically pictures of nature, and some of them are pretty capable. The general level is pretty low. They made me the chairman of a jury recently, as a guest chairman of the jury at their last exhibition out there. They're trying to raise the standard. And we did a little good work in that direction. But there was no really provocative work submitted. People just don't send the stuff in, people who are really doing something. So you see I'm not exactly a kind of a person who really believes in the standpat tradition of painting as it was, because an awful lot of water has gone under the bridge, if you know anything about it, as you do. You can't stand still. Some of these people are very self-satisfied with the old cliches, you know, of what is good and what is bad. You can't teach them anything.
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and what is bad. You can't teach them anything.

Mills: Do you know the original situation out of which the Society

Mills: grew in the first place?

Macky: I don't know how it exactly began, but there was a national movement in the East called the Society for Sanity in Art, promulgated by some woman, I think, who had money, who believed in propagandizing the status quo in painting. And it naturally received a great following, because a great many people would like to go into the fold of just paint the way you see, paint nature, you know, just paint realistically and so on.

I don't know when they began, a long time ago.

It's never been an active force. I think it's been a reactionary force. It's a reactionary refuge.

Mills: It's before my time here, but I understand there used to be a great deal of opposition by the Society of Western Artists and an occasional boycotting of shows and so forth, and that they were out doing things, whether the right thing or not is another question. In Seattle, for instance, I heard a great deal about the various battles between the Society of Western Artists and the more progressive art groups.

Macky: Well, they just separated. One belonged to the Art Association, and the other belonged to the Western.

Gilb: Do you regard the Art Association as progressive?

Macky: Oh, yes. Yes, it's the progressive --

Gilb: Even today?

Macky: Well, even so, with all its faults, I think that it's healthy. You've got to not only contend with it, but I think welcome it and guide it if you can. If there were

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Now take Charles Howard, for instance. I admire his work very much. He's internationally known. He's a local person; he's in England, now. Internationally known and a very significant abstract painter. That Howard family has been a very significant family here. Bob Howard's wife, Adeline Kent, is a very significant sculptress, and Bob, himself, is a stormy petrel who does all kinds of whimsical things. His father was the one who designed this Campanile. He was the chief architect for this University. John Galen Howard, an old friend of mine. In fact, he belonged to the same camp with me in the Bohemian Club. I knew him very well. Quite a scholar, a scholar in Greek mythology and a very wonderful person. He has a wonderful family, three sons, John and Bob and Charles. And a daughter. Perhaps the most famous one is Charles, and Bob is very well known. John is a very good painter of a very meticulous kind. He's married to a sculptress now, and they're living in Mexico.

Mills: How about the Oakland Art League?

Macky: I couldn't tell you much about that. There never was much of an art organization over here of any significance as we looked at it from across the Bay.

Macgy:

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Gilb: How did they regard Oakland from the other side:

Macky: Well, they just didn't know it was here in those early days. It's just coming into its own, now, just through sheer weight of numbers.

But it will never be what San Francisco is; they've got the banks over there. Over the years, I have come to realize that that is so. San Francisco is the banking center.

Gilb: And that affects art?

Macky: Oh, yes. Do you live on this side?

Gilb: Yes.

Macky: If you live on the other side as I do you find you are in a different world altogether. It's a great metropolitan area. At night time there's something doing. You go downtown here -- it's dead.

Mills: It's a much more cosmopolitan area.

Macky: Much. That's why I would hesitate very much in coming to live over here. I live in San Francisco. If you drive around San Francisco at night, you feel that you are in a real pulsing city. It's got a wonderful feeling about it.

Mills: Lately, San Francisco and the Bay cities are ceasing to be separate areas -- they're becoming one large area.

Macky: Oh, yes. It's just that I have lived on the other side for forty years. I'm very familiar with this side of the Bay too but I've tried hard to find the answer ... but there still is a big difference.

Mills: One thing I've theorized a little bit about (on towns and the art that is produced in them) -- I think each town, maybe like each country or each culture, has its own little cycle.

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- Mills: And at different points, different things happen in it. San Francisco and Monterey and Carmel are now areas to which someone interested in art would go. You know, someone who had the ambition to be a painter. They would never go to Seattle. And there is more here to encourage a person to be a painter -- more groups, more schools, more exhibitions. Because it is a little more difficult in Seattle and Portland, if you want to be a painter it is because you really want to be and nothing is carrying you along. In fact, it's a case of overcoming the opposition. I think that stronger personalities, as painters, emerge out of a situation like that than emerge out of an area in which there are many, many painters.
- Mrs. M: I've had a number of students from up north, and invariably they're the better students. They've been grounded better.
- Macky: Also, from Salt Lake City. I've noticed that.
- Gilb: How would you account for that?
- Macky: I think there's an inherently fine character in those places. The Mormons are fine people, and there is some very fine stock up north.
- Mrs. M: They are always superior students.
- Mills: One thing that struck me here is the number of painters who are strictly amateurs who think they can exhibit in professional exhibitions.
- Macky: It's a strange thing, Paul, and I've been disturbed about it. There should be more diversity here -- they all seem to run to a formula. They've discovered the great subjective area in our brains, the area of children. Delightful. But I maintain that you can't get to the top of really mature expression unless you have gone through some analytical

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in our brains, the area of children, delightful. But I maintain that you can't get to the top of really mature expression unless you have gone through some analytical

- Macky: development.
- Mills: Styles of art take over in the Bay Area like styles in automobiles, skirt lengths, and things of that kind.
- Macky: On the other hand, I'm amazed at the fecundity of their imagination, their inventiveness.
- Mrs. M: Wonderful, isn't it?
- Macky: It isn't dependent on the study of nature. The reason why I've encouraged it up at the school there is to save me the cost of models. (Laughter) It saves me an awful lot of studio space. We used to have a nude model and we had all week long to study, a whole room doing sculpture. We'd have been bankrupt long ago if we did that now. But they huddle around with a blowtorch now and play with wire. They have one turn with a life model, sometimes. It makes me sick to think of it.
- Mrs. M: You're getting recorded.
- Macky: I don't care if I am. I know the work that Rodin did and all those great sculptors in Europe, and they studied from the model.

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Gilb: EXHIBITING; ART GALLERIES

Mack: Well, he was a designer, a dress designer. First of all,
 Gilb: Perhaps we should mention some of the smaller galleries of

he tried to learn drawing from me. And I couldn't teach art in the Bay Area. What was the Beaux Arts Gallery? his drawing. But he was an amateur with the French language.

Mack: You speak to Mrs. Ryan of the Rotunda Gallery. Did she
 by first very vivid memory was his bringing to me a book of start it?

Mrs. M: We started it; a group of artists wanted a place to exhibit.
 He didn't like them because I didn't think the fellow Maynard Dixon, and ... Beatrice took charge of it.

Mack: Now, Beatrice could give you a lot of history.

Gilb: Who?

Mills: Beatrice Judd Ryan. She's now the Director of the Rotunda
 Gallery of the City of Paris.

Mrs. M: She can give you more information than anybody.

Gilb: Do you remember any other small galleries around the Bay
 Area that were important.

Mack: Helgeson used to make beautiful frames and have a few things
 up in his gallery, don't you remember?

Mrs. M: And, of course, there was Tallerton.

Mack: Oh, yes. Tallerton. He was more interested in etching though.

Mrs. M: Yes, but he had a gallery.

Mack: There were others, too, different little galleries that started up. Gump's is the long-line one that had all the stuff that was -- well, he didn't just play up to the gallery, but he was always getting stuff in from Europe and handling local stuff as well. And doing high-class framing, real gold frames, you know. Gilding is a lost art nowadays.

And for years there was Vickery Atkins and Torrey and the Graves Gallery (on Sutter Street) all specializing in Contemporary Art. (Note Graves died recently - 1953)

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Perhaps we should mention some of the smaller galleries of art in the Bay Area. What was the Beaux Arts Gallery?

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And for years there was Vickery Atkins and Torrey and the

Graves Gallery (on Hunter Street) all specializing in

Contemporary Art. (Note Graves died recently - 1953)

- Gilb: Tell us about Monsieur Labaudt.
- Macky: Well, he was a couturier, a dress designer. First of all, he tried to learn drawing from me. And I couldn't teach him drawing. But he was au courant with the French language. My first very vivid memory was his bringing to me a book of reproductions of Cezanne in black and white. And I told him I didn't like them because I didn't think the fellow could draw -- that was years ago, you see. I will justify myself; when I did see his work when I was in Paris, I thought he was a great colorist. But Labaudt (who couldn't draw) trying to tell me!
- Mrs. M: But Labaudt was a wonderful painter, and a wonderful person.
- Macky: Remarkable person, yes - really a great designer.
- Mills: How long ago did he start his gallery?
- Mrs. M: He didn't start it.
- Mills: Oh, his wife did?
- Mrs. M: After he died, yes. She keeps a memory for him by helping all the young artists.
- Macky: She doesn't get a nickel out of it.
- Mrs. M: She gives all her time. She writes out all the invitations. She hangs all the pictures. She does the whole thing. All they do is pay for the printing of the things that go out.
- Macky: We knew Marcel Labaudt very intimately -- you could write a book about them both.
- Mills: She is really a remarkable woman.
- Mrs. M: Marcel worked for him. He made dresses for fashionable people, designed them himself.

Gilp:

Bellevue about Monsieur Labaud.

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She is really a remarkable woman.

Mrs. M:

Marcel worked for him. He made dresses for fashionable

people, designed them himself.

Macky: On Powell street. Oh, he was a great character. And he'd have parties there.

Mrs. M: He was a great designer. And he became a great painter.

Macky: Incidentally, you haven't mentioned it, but of course you know it, that there was the Haven Gallery up there in Piedmont, which was full of Russian pictures.

Mills: Yes, some of those went from there to the Oakland Art Gallery.

Gilb: How long was that Gallery in existence? Is it still in existence?

Mills: No. It's not there. It was -- oh, it started out as a little school and an art shop, I think, didn't it?

Macky: It had to do with the Havens who ran the Key Route System. You see, that was the terminus of the Key Route to Piedmont and there was an art gallery there. And Partington, Dick Partington was the director, and Maurice Logan, whom you know, was his assistant as a young fellow. But he could tell you a lot about that.

Logan could tell you a lot about that early group, too. He knew Jack London. I didn't know Jack London. You see, Maurice Logan was born here, educated here, and trained at the San Francisco Art School for seven years, and then he studied in Chicago. And now today he has become, in his own right, I think a very fine painter, in his own way of painting, water color. He has recently been elected a member of the National Academy. He told me the other day, there was nothing he'd love more to have been than to be a portrait painter. There are many portraits at the Bohemian Club that he did.

Macgy: On Powell Street. Oh, he was a great character. And

He'd have parties there.

Mrs. M.: He was a great designer. And he became a great painter.

Macgy: Incidentally, you haven't mentioned it, but of course you

know it, that there was the Haven Gallery up there in

Piedmont, which was full of Russian pictures.

Mrs. M.: Yes, some of those went from there to the Oakland Art

Gallery.

Macgy: How long was that gallery in existence? Is it still in

existence?

Mrs. M.: No. It's not there. It was -- oh, it started out as a little

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Gilb: You've done some very significant portraits, haven't you?

Macky: A few. My life is definitely a failure.

Gilb: Oh, my!

Macky: Oh, yes. I don't say that facetiously. Compared, definitely compared to what I could have been.

Gilb: Isn't that true of everyone?

Macky: I mean, it's tragic, when a person's really trained to paint, you know. My wife's the same way. We were not second-raters, at all.

Mills: Any artist who gives up his own personal career to administer an art school or something like that always feels a great loss, I think.

Macky: I'm going to paint the rest of my life, pretty soon, what little there's left of it. I think I still know how to paint. I know it's out of date, the kind of painting I do, but --

Gilb: Yet there are so few artists with a business sense, with a capacity to administrate, that that's needed very badly.

Macky: Well it is unfortunately rather rare, unfortunate for whoever is able to do it. Although it has been a wonderful experience for me. It would be an interesting story to write about the development of the various art museums of San Francisco.

When I first came here there was the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, which was a relic of the Mid-winter Fair.

After the 1915 Exposition, Louis Milgardt, the architect, redesigned it - a 1' Exposition - all gingerbread exterior.

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After the 1915 Exposition, Louis Mumford, the architect,

redesigned it - a 1' Exposition - all gingerbread exterior.

Macky: It has only recently again been remodeled with its exterior made a very severe style -- appropriate for the Park.

I remember once there was a little statement made by Burnham, he who envisioned a new San Francisco after the 1906 fire.

Gilb: Well, he'd made a plan before the fire --

Macky: He'd made plans beforehand, was it? Well, it wasn't Bernard Maybeck who told me this, but I've seen the piece of paper upon which was written a thought like this: a placid pool, a colonnade, and a green sward. And this was the thought that Maybeck had, a thought given to him by Burnham, from which Maybeck envisioned a pool, a colonnade, and the Palace of Fine Arts. You see what I mean? I remember that paper being put in the vault at the San Francisco Art Association. I was asking Miss Sullivan about it the other day, but she didn't know where it was. It was done in pencil in the handwriting of Burnham. The genesis of the idea of the Palace of Fine Arts, which is revered in its memory, its associations, and its possibilities. What will happen to it, I don't know. I'm not so sold on classical art for today, but it has a very warm association with the memory of the Panama-Pacific Exposition, which really was a marvelous showing of painting in that big gallery.

Wesley:

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MURALS IN SAN FRANCISCO

- Macky: All the architecture at the Exposition was travertine texture and had a beautiful quality to it. And beautiful murals were painted. In themselves they may not be great masterpieces, although they were very capable things, by men like Reed and Frank Vincent Dumond. And by the way, one of his murals is now installed in the San Francisco Public Library, one that was originally in the Panama Pacific Exposition.
- Gilb: What happened to most of the murals, were they destroyed?
- Macky: I don't know what happened to them, but I know that that happens to be one.
- Gilb: What happened to yours?
- Macky: They went back to Australia. And strange to say, one that my wife painted, a rather big mural, as big as this room, we found it down in New Zealand. She was so surprised to see it, yes. I'll tell you one thing. Frank Brangwyn had some significant murals, and they are installed in the War Memorial Building. I remember seeing Francis McComas. I said to Francis, "This is going to have a great influence on the West here, this idea of painting murals." And, well, he didn't quite agree with me on that, and he made some slighting remarks about Brangwyn, which I think were true enough. They were commercial in a sense, but very brilliantly clever. Have you ever seen them? They're in the War Memorial Building in the section that belongs to the veterans, there's a big hall there, and these murals were taken out of the Exposition

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Macky: and installed there. No one ever looks at them, but I will say that the idea of having murals there did inspire for a while the idea of creating a mural art in the West here.

Later on, I remember that we suggested that we bring up Diego Rivera to paint a mural for the new School of Fine Arts on Chester Street. It's still there.

Gilb: When was that? When did you suggest that?

Macky: About 1927 or '28. I know the school was opened in 1926, and we had this great room there, and this big mural was painted by Diego Rivera. We got him to come up from Mexico.

At that time I resigned from the Board and became Executive Director of the San Francisco Art Association, and I suggested that Tim Pflueger, the architect, be put in my place, and he eventually became President of the San Francisco Art Association. And he at the time was designing the new Stock Exchange, and he grabbed Diego from us and had him do the mural there first. And then let us have our commission, which we had given him through Mr. William L. Gerstle (who paid for it) to do our mural, you see.

Gilb: Was everyone in agreement about having Rivera? There was some opposition, wasn't there?

Macky: Oh, no. That developed later when he began to exhibit his political ideas, more or less in Detroit, I think it was, and later on it came to a head in Rockefeller Center, New York. We were the first to give him a commission in the United States -- in fact, I think I wrote the letter to ask him to come up.

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States -- in fact, I think I wrote the letter to ask him to

come up.

Gilb: How had you known about him?

Macky: Stackpole, one of our faculty, had been to Mexico and had worked with Diego Rivera. Ralph Stackpole was quite a significant character here, you know -- sculptor and somewhat of a painter.

Gilb: He's in Europe now, isn't he?

Macky: He's in Europe now. And he was the one who told us about Rivera. Long before this time I used to teach Orozco. He was in my classes for drawing for two years as a young man.

Gilb: At the San Francisco school?

Macky: Yes. It was just around 1917 or '18 that Orozco came up as a refugee. He'd been in a revolution down there and had lost one of his arms; his right arm, I think, and he could work with his left. An amazingly clever person. And I taught him drawing there.

A few years later he came back to pay us a visit in this new school which I designed, the School of Fine Arts on Chestnut Street in San Francisco, and he said, "Oh, I'll paint you a mural to go on that tower in memory of our old days when I was a student of this school." He was a student when the school was at the site of the Mark Hopkins Hotel.

Mills: What sort of a student was Orozco?

Macky: Well, I remember distinctly he was rather crude, you know. He was instinctively rather crude and rough. I didn't think much of him myself, to tell you the truth. He probably didn't work carefully enough, but nevertheless he was evidently way ahead of me in his ideas of vigor and strength and all that sort of thing.

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Macky: Well, Stackpole went down there. If he were only here, he could tell you a lot of things about his experiences down there in Mexico. They were always coming back from Mexico with these stories about the wonderful things they were doing down there, and why couldn't we have some murals up here. So, for a long time after that we had mural painting taught in the California School of Fine Arts. We had buildings, rooms, murals, right across the cafeteria, big murals here and big murals there. (Ray Boynton was fresco teacher and also a pioneer here in that field of art expression.)

Gilb: Run out of space pretty soon, wouldn't you?

Macky: They'd paint them out, you know, paint over them again. Well, that seems to have died out because, unless you are abstract entirely, there's a certain amount of story telling in a mural, some theme, something or other like most traditional compositions have, you know. So it gradually died out. I suppose our people are not naturally mural painters.

Ray Boynton, however, was another character who did some murals. In fact, he has a mural over here in the University Faculty Club which I notice they've painted over with a foggy mist because they don't like it.

Mills: Well, the mural tradition out in this part of the country was pretty much sustained by the two Expositions and then by the WPA.

Gilb: The Coit Tower murals under the WPA too.

Mills: The WPA?

Gilb: The WPA sponsored the Coit Tower murals, and then the WPA later with the Fair did a lot. Do you remember the Coit Tower

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The WPA?

The WPA sponsored the Coit Tower murals, and then the WPA

later with the Fair did a lot. Do you remember the Coit Tower

- Gilb: controversy?
- Macky: Yes, oh, yes.
- Gilb: What was the story there?
- Macky: Oh, well, I don't know. But I do know they'd come to me when I was on the Art Commission. They wanted me to go to bat to have them torn off the walls because they said they exemplified the Communist idea. You see, one of the murals up there was painted to commemorate that massacre, they call it, on the waterfront when one of the longshoremen, you know, was killed. Of course the Communists made a great deal of that. And so in this mural up there they painted this idea of conflict between capital and labor. A strange thing, it seems that throughout the later development of murals, brought about by the dicta of Diego Rivera -- he being a Communist, believed that painting should be used as a vehicle for propaganda, and so did Orozco, whose work is more or less symbolic of social stresses and strains and ambitions and inequality of man to man and all that sort of thing, the aspiration of man and the suffering of man. He'd been through this hell of a life in Mexico, in a revolution, you see. Those people are -- some of them have suffered a good deal. The same controversy in the post office over the murals by Refregier in the post office -- San Francisco.
- Gilb: What year was that?
- Macky: Well, they're still there, they're still talking about tearing them down. They're not finished so long ago.
- Mills: They cover quite a period of years, though. Don't they go, oh, I think from 1935 --

controversy? Giff:

Yes, oh, yes. Macky:

What was the story there? Giff:

Oh, well, I don't know. But I do know they'd come to me when Macky:

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They cover quite a period of years, though. Don't they so, Mills:

Oh, I think from 1935 --

Macky: Seems like yesterday. Seems like I was talking to him just like I'm talking to you, just yesterday.

Mills: Oh, I think they were finished just before the war. There were different dates all the way through on it.

Gilb: What was that controversy? I'd like to hear about it. When it was.

Mills: This was about two years ago. I think what happened was that the whole pattern of mural painting in this area from the early 30's on was one of social protest. That was true, I think, of a great deal of American art. The paintings, the lithographs, the other media have not endured as well or they are away in files or they are not quite as conspicuous, and the only thing that is left quite so prominently in the public eye are the murals.

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OROZCO, THE BLUE FOUR, MATISSE

- Gilb: I wouldn't agree that the paintings of the 30's were all of social protest, Paul.
- Mills: Not all of them. That was a very strong factor in painting in this country. There were a lot of print-makers that were. But did that whole school, that whole approach to mural painting, did that come to this area with Orozco and Rivera?
- Macky: No, no. Orozco didn't have influence here whatever. He didn't stay here, except to my knowledge, as a student. And later I met him with his lady friend who was the one who pushed him and was his mouthpiece, a very dynamic person, who exploited him, pushed him forward, introduced him, and interpreted him to the American public, just like Madam -- what's her name? I'm thinking of the lady who brought the Blue Four out here from Germany.
- Mills: Madam Galka Scheyer.
- Macky: Madam Galka Scheyer. You see, I knew her very well. She came to the California School of Fine Arts one day, 1923 or 1924, and she tried to ram those things down our throats first thing. And when she didn't make much headway up here, she went down to Los Angeles and exploited them there. But she was a really capable person.
- Mills: That's another story in itself. Those were shown in the Henry Gallery in 1926, in the Oakland Art Gallery in 1927. The collection went to the University of California for a while and is now in the Pasadena Art Institute.
- Macky: The Blue Four. There you are. Takes a woman sometimes to believe in somebody and push them forward. That woman, I

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And later I met him with his lady friend who was the one

who praised him and was his mouthpiece, a very dynamic person,

who exploited him, pushed him forward, introduced him, and

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what's her name? I'm thinking of the lady who brought the

Blue Hour out here from Germany.

W: Madam Galia Scheyer.

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A: The Blue Hour. There you are. Takes a woman sometimes to

believe in somebody and push them forward. That woman, I

Macky: don't know who she was, but she was a fine, dynamic person, and so was Galka Scheyer. My gosh, couldn't she talk! She'd just come from Germany, you know, and she had a few of these things and she told us the story that she knew the Blue Four over there; that she knew all about them; that she knew how poor they were after the first World War, how they had to paint on paper or any old thing they could find. They couldn't afford canvas; they couldn't afford paints. They had come through frightful suffering and seemed to produce this -- this essence of art that was found in their expression -- seemed to produce something new, you see. It was produced through suffering. Suffering and anguish.

Mills: It wasn't an expressionistic school, though. It was a very intellectual approach to painting. It was very non-objective, like the early Kandinskys. Kandinsky was in that group, and Jawlenski. It was all very geometrical.

Macky: A friend of mine, Marjorie Eaton, was a very, very close friend to Galka Scheyer. She seemed to be able to catch the idea, like young people can, whereas an old academician like myself couldn't. She was a student of mine; I taught her drawing and painting, and everything, but she went off on a tangent, you see. And she got in with all that. And she got to appreciating, got to know some of these people, and she bought their pictures. Wheels within wheels, aren't there?

Mills: Incidentally, just sort of for the record, we have quite a bit of information on the Blue Four and the showings in this area in our files in the Oakland Art Gallery.

Macky: They were first shown in San Francisco. The first persons

don't know who she was, but she was a fine, dynamic person, and so was Galia Scheyer. My god, couldn't she talk! She'd just come from Germany, you know, and she had a few of these things and she told us the story that she knew the Blue Four over there; that she knew all about them; that she knew how poor they were after the first World War, how they had to paint on paper or any old thing they could find. They couldn't afford canvases; they couldn't afford paints. They had come through frightful suffering and seemed to produce this -- this essence of art that was found in their expression -- seemed to produce something new, you see. It was produced through suffering. Suffering and anguish.

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- Macky: she came to see were those of us at the School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. And we encouraged her; we gave her a little exhibition there. We showed the things around, you know. But we didn't take them too seriously, at least, I didn't.
- Mills: Do you remember the year?
- Macky: Well, yes, it was before we moved into the new school. It must have been before 1926, 1924, pardon me, '23.
- Mills: She made several trips back and forth from this country to Europe, didn't she?
- Macky: Yes, she did. I had no idea that she -- well, she was very dynamic; she was one of those people that almost repelled you because she was so dynamic, you know.
- Gilb: Did you meet Matisse when he came through in 1926? Do you remember anything special about him?
- Macky: I told you yesterday that I didn't have much of a talk with him. I had my photograph taken with him. I've got a copy of that somewhere. He visited the school over there and looked around and made a few talks, which were translated by someone, Edgar Walter, perhaps. I told you that one incident where I said to him, "You must have had a great deal of courage to have that exhibition of your work." A great big radical exhibition in Paris, around 1908, it was, And he said, "No. It was born of conviction." I remember him saying to me so emphatically, "Non. Mais non, mais non, c'etait ^{ne} ~~ne~~ de conviction."

she came to see those of us at the School of Fine Arts
 in San Francisco. And we encouraged her; we gave her a little
 exhibition there. We showed the things around, you know.
 but we didn't take them too seriously, at least, I didn't.

Do you remember the year?

Well, yes, it was before we moved into the new school. It

must have been before 1926, 1927, perhaps, '28.

She made several trips back and forth from this country to

Europe, didn't she?

Yes, she did. I had no idea that she -- well, she was very

dynamic; she was one of those people that almost repelled you

because she was so dynamic, you know.

Did you meet Matsuzaki when he came through in 1926? Do you

remember anything special about him?

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- Mackey: I remember I ART COMMISSION
- Gilb: We should also mention some of your other work for the city and Godshaw was an old friend of mine, you see, and he said, of San Francisco. What does the Art Commission do?
- Mackey: It approves any art work in connection with the city of San Francisco which is purchased by the city funds or is on city property -- any statuary, any mural paintings, any architectural embellishments that impinge upon the area that belongs under the jurisdiction of the city.
- Gilb: Were you on the Commission a long time?
- Mackey: About seven years, something like that. I helped to form it. I was the chairman of the Commonwealth Club Art Section for two years. My committee engineered the whole thing so that we got it onto the City Charter.
- Gilb: Oh, that grew out of the Commonwealth Club?
- Mackey: Yes. I remember when we got through that, we started the Federation of Arts, and I was the first chairman of that. Our idea in forming it was that it might take an interest in the work of the Art Commission and, representing all the various organizations of art in the city, might bring pressure to bear in the selection of personnel to the Art Commission.
- Gilb: The people on the Art Commission -- how were they selected?
- Mackey: Oh, they were selected by the mayor. First thing, they wanted me to be on it as a charter member, you see, and I said, "By gosh, I'm not a citizen." I'd been working away for years, I came through the I-80 to San Francisco. So he said, "Where you know, working at different things in art. It never dawned on me that I wasn't a citizen. I felt so much at home here, I thought I was a regular American."

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I thought I was a regular American.

Macky: I remember I was down at Stackpole's studio one day, and he was doing a sculpture portrait of Godshaw, the City Recorder. And Godshaw was an old friend of mine, too. And he said, "Spencer, why don't you become a citizen?" "Well," I said, "I'm not going to all those Irish micks there and ask them if I can become a citizen or not." "Oh," he said, "I'll fix it. You come on up." I said, "I've got my car. I'll just drive up to the City Hall right now. It's a work day."

All right, he took me upstairs. Went up to the top floor, and he said, "This is Mr. Macky. He would like to make his application for citizenship." Sure enough, there was a big Irishman with a big cigar, and he said, "Fill out this paper." I had all the answers and questions, you know, and Godshaw went on downstairs, to his office. So I filled it out: "Where were you born?" "New Zealand." "What did you do then?" "Well, I went to Europe." "Well, how long were you there?" "Where did you live?" "London." "Port of Embarkation?" "Southampton."

This was just what I expected. The Irishman boomed at me, "How do you mean you lived in London and sailed from Southampton?" I said, "The ships are too big to sail up to London - hence Southampton." "Humph!" "Where did you go then?" "New York." "What did you do then?" "I went up to Canada through the CPR to San Francisco." He said, "Where did you cross the border?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "You're not from England, you're from Canada." I said, "Listen, they let me loose in New York. I was there quite a

Reply:

I remember I was born at St. Paul's studio one day, and he was doing a sculpture portrait of Goharaw, the City Recorder. And Goharaw was an old friend of mine, too. And he said,

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Macky: while, and I just took the CPR to San Francisco. That's all."
"Doesn't make any difference -- you're from Canada. Where did you cross the border?" I said, "I don't remember. We came across at night time and I was asleep." And he said, "Oh, it's all wrong. Go and fill it out properly."

So, I took the thing down to Godshaw again, and I said, "I told you. Those Micks there -- they don't understand plain English." He gave me a big cigar, and he said, "Don't bother. I'll fix it all up." All right, I waited around and about a year later I met Godshaw. He went off to Europe. I met him in the French Theatre, and I said, "Mr. Godshaw, what about my citizenship?" "Oh, yes," he said, "well, you've got to do what the judge tells you to do." I said, "Now listen. I put all those questions in absolutely truthfully, and I left it to you." "Well," he said, "I don't know. You've got to do this and that." By that time they had changed their office to someplace down on Mission street, and by that time Con, my wife, had decided to be a citizen, too. So we both went down there, and they treated us very nicely. There were not that usual gang of Irish Politicians up there. We finally got through, and we became citizens. The year -- I've got it all down here -- was 1938.

Gilb: So, then you could be on the Art Commission?

Macky: Then they put me on the Art Commission, but I was a little late to get on the first lot. That was five years later. I know Gaskin was the one who wanted me to take his place on the Art Commission.

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 on the Art Commission.

Gilb: Did they have any big controversies on the Commission at the time that you knew about it?

Macky: Oh, yes. We used to have a lot of different things.

Gilb: Well, what sort of things did you ...

Macky: Well, whether to have these open air shows was one. Of course we were in charge of music, too. Music and literature and painting and sculpture and architecture and all those things. Although I was the chairman of the Art Section. Bufano was on my committee, you know.

Gilb: He's been a subject of controversy.

Mills: He has!

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He has! Nashy:

FEDERATION OF ARTS

Macky: These were the things we pulled together to make the Federation of Arts: The San Francisco Art Association, the San Francisco Opera Association, the San Francisco Musical Club, San Francisco Municipal Chorus, the Summer Symphony Association of San Francisco, the Young People's Symphony Concert, the Pacific Musical Society, the Music Club of San Francisco, the Pacific Opera Association, Sacrobund, Promusica, the American Federation of Art, the Federation of Musicians Local Six, the Federation of Music Clubs, Art Section of Music Teachers Association, and so on. I have listed here many more.

Mills: Tremendous number of people.

Macky: All those things are running around San Francisco, you know. It's quite a big place. We got them all together and formed that. It's still in existence, but they didn't have any leadership. Not that I had any time to lead it, or anything, but they were going to make me a life member of the thing but they forgot all about that.

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Macky: ON ART: A CONVERSATION AND SOME PHILOSOPHY

- Gilb: What do you feel about these open-air shows (you say they've been a subject of controversy)? Do you feel they're a good thing?
- Macky: Oh, I suppose so. I tell you, I'm not very enthusiastic about them, myself.
- Gilb: Why not?
- Macky: Why? Because I don't think you're going to get the best art to be exhibited out of doors with the curse of the lack of proper protection. And, furthermore, it's a free-for-all, and it's very difficult for a first-class painter to -- a young fellow like Siegriest, there -- to mix up with all those that are so terribly bad.
- Mrs. M: Of course, he has done it.
- Macky: Mind you, I've never said a word against it. I fought for it. The first one we had up there, they decided not to have it because during the war we did not have any material. And I walked after the meeting out into the plaza in front of the City Hall, and I saw these barracks. It occurred to me, couldn't we get permission to use these barracks, to be able to tack things on the walls. I went back in again, and wemanaged to get Brooks to make an ordinance to allow us to use those buildings. So we called a special meeting to put the thing through. And the first very successful open air show was put right on the plaza there utilizing these barracks which were about to be pulled down. You couldn't buy material.

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which were about to be pulled down. You couldn't buy material.

Macky: You couldn't buy wood during the war. I'm not taking any credit for it because the other fellows got in and did the work. What's that fellow that does the wood engravings, he got in and ran the show? He used to teach up at our school. I can't remember names -- terrible handicap. If you want to be a success in life, be sure to remember names.

Gilb: Mrs. Macky was just saying that the San Francisco Art Association has been responsible for all the progressive things in this area, in art. And the other groups have been groups which were dissatisfied for some reason. Small groups.

Mills: And the San Francisco Art Association, I gather, is a rather remarkable art association for any town. There's nothing comparable to it in Seattle or Portland or in Los Angeles.

Gilb: Do you know, Paul, whether there are art associations like it in the East?

Mills: Seattle has no significant art association at all. There was a small art group that was active before the Museum was founded, but that more or less grew into the Museum membership there. The Portland Art Museum has an artist membership, and there's always one or two artists on the Portland Art Museum board, which is a good program, and they are fairly active there, but there's nothing as far as leadership in so far as actual painting is concerned. It's more social and community.

Gilb: Is the San Francisco Art Association known throughout the rest of the country?

Mills: I would say it's more known than any other. I had not heard of it as such in Seattle, although I knew of the groups

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Mills: which the Art Association backed -- the School of Fine Arts and the San Francisco Museum.

Los Angeles has an art association, but I think nothing that's of any particular significance.

Gilb: So it's really a unique phenomenon, at least on the West Coast, this very strong art association and grass roots movement.

Mills: Yes, that has continued to be very progressive. Generally, what happens is that each association represents what you might say one generation or one period approach to art. A group of people get into that association and present their viewpoint, which goes over very well, and ...

Gilb: And then they disperse.

Mills: ... gradually a new association comes along. It's like Harper's magazine and other magazines that have been progressive for a long, long time, and unlike other magazines which represent a particular point of view and go out of existence when that point of view ceases to be quite as important.

Gilb: Now, do you think this phenomenon that Paul has just described can be attributed to something unique in the Bay Area, and what would you attribute it to?

Macky: This is a great pioneering center. It is the place where people came to the gold rush. It's got all that pioneering spirit, all the bohemian spirit, the adventurous spirit.

Mills: On the other hand, Seattle had that too, along similar lines. A little later, but exactly the same kind of climate.

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Mills: On the other hand, Seattle had that too, along similar lines. A little later, but exactly the same kind of climate.

Macky: They didn't have the gold rush and the Palace Hotel and Virginia City.

Gilb: It's very interesting to see an institution and say, "Why did this come here? Why here? Not only what influence does it have but"

Macky: What brought Robert Louis Stevenson here? What brought having Jack London grow up and George Sterling -- the names that you can probably enumerate. All the characters that have been attracted to this area, why? Why are the banks here? Why is it the great financial center?

Mills: Of course, it is a very exotic and very exciting city. I think that had a lot to do with it.

Macky: It's a picturesque place. Chinatown.

Mrs. M: One of the reasons we've always attributed to the success of the art association in keeping modern was that they didn't sell anything here in San Francisco. It's a very bad place for people to sell art. It has been always. It's an experimental place.

Gilb: Now why do you think it is bad to sell?

Mrs. M: I don't know. It just is, it has been.

Macky: I tell you it is largely due to the fact that the change in the complexion of art is pioneered here, largely due to the progressive little group of artists that have lived in San Francisco. And the Annex and the Fair, World's Fair. Now they are very lively in Los Angeles, numerically and artistically in expression and everything else. But I said to Millard Sheets when he was up here, one day, I said, "Millard, if you had been born up here, they would have

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Macky: strangled you the day you were born." Because he was a smart alec, you know. Here they've always been more serious about ..

Mrs. M: Critical.

Macky: Critical. Very critical and discriminating in the things that they thought were good. And if you could carefully trace your way through that, in the history of the development even since we've been here (and I think that's about the time that could be traced), you will find that they've been very much aware of the significance of changes in their art. It is so in Los Angeles and Seattle now, but I mean we were the pioneers here in doing all that sort of thing.

Mills: There's another great difference between the San Francisco area and, say, Seattle and Portland, which are somewhat similar. There are no strong progressive art groups there -- there is no point of view which is expressed by any group at all. But there are very strong, very important individual painters, for instance, C. S. Price of Portland and Mark Tobey and Morris Graves of Seattle.

Gilb: Who isolate themselves, don't they?

Mills: They are much more isolated individuals. And you never find anything like the San Francisco annuals or even like this annual we have in the museum here now, where there are a large number of people all expressing a rather new point of view. Both Seattle and Portland are much more individualistic. You find people who are more conservative in their

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- Mills: basic approach, not quite so ready to go along with each new development as it happens, but very solid, very sound painters. And actually I think it would almost be easier for a painter to make an important name for himself coming out of either Seattle or Portland than it would be out of San Francisco.
- Gilb: Well now, that's another thing I wanted to ask. Do you think that the fact that there has been this very strong feeling and this one organization, do you think that has had any harmful effect on the art of the Bay Area?
- Macky: Well, it's been harmful to some and very helpful for others.
- Mrs. M: We feel that Price belongs to us, in a way.
- Mills: He had his major development, the things that he is now known for, in Portland.
- Mrs. M: The germ of it was down in Monterey.
- Macky: Oh, yes.
- Mills: Well ...
- Macky: Oh, we knew him very well. In fact, we give credit to Portland for giving him a haven where he could develop. He was unrecognized here.
- Gilb: It does stifle people, doesn't it, sometimes?
- Macky: Well, actually, in the early days paintings were bought to keep. Very enormous sums. And Tavernier and all the older artists that you could easily find, that were mentioned in the Bohemian Club, were selling their paintings. People did live by art. And if they didn't live by it legitimately, many were doing work on the Examiner as illustrators, because they didn't have photo engraving in those days, you see. Then people suddenly -- the newer art came in around 1917

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 Then people suddenly -- the newer art came in around 1917

Macky: and 1918. People then began to suspect the old art. You could look at Keiths, but you wouldn't buy them any more. Although they didn't like the new; it used to be a disgrace to have any of these things on your wall -- now it's becoming rather a distinction for your discriminating taste to be able to select something of the more modern things. In other words, I think they've won the day for the time being. I'm looking forward to the day when painting will not go back (it never goes back), but when the newer ideas will be incorporated into the great stream of what art really is down through the ages.

Gilb: What do you think that is, Mr. Macky?

Macky: You can't ever tell until history is written. We've put Cezanne where he belongs now, and we've put Picasso in his place. What's going on right now is a stepping stone, a very healthy stepping stone, toward the art of the future -- which must express, to my way of thinking, something more intimate in the feeling a human being has towards his fellow-beings, an expression of life itself. Now, I may be wrong. Perhaps we've lost all interest in humanity.

Mills: Do you really feel the modern art is lacking in humanity? I think a lot of the humanity we see in a painting is projected by us through familiarity, through experiencing those paintings, and a new style of painting at any time lacks that realm of associations and that mellowness in a sense and that sort of evocativeness.

Macky: You belong to the new generation. I'm not against it at all. I had to learn to like the Blue Four and all those

and I think people then began to suspect the old art. You could look at Kallias, but you wouldn't buy them any more. Although they didn't like the new; it used to be a disgrace to have any of these things on your wall -- now it's becoming rather a distinction for your discriminating taste to be able to select something of the more modern things. In other words, I think they've won the day for the time being. I'm looking forward to the day when painting will not go back (it never goes back), but when the newer ideas will be incorporated into the great stream of what art really is down through the ages.

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Macky: things, you know. I couldn't take them seriously at first until I began to see those subtle undertones and a certain phase of expression which perhaps was a little bit suggested by Whistler.

Gilb: Has most of your painting been portrait painting?

Macky: I suppose so.

Gilb: Yours too, Mrs. Macky?

Mrs. M: I like to paint everything.

Mills: You've done some very nice still-lives.

Macky: Yes, she has.

Mrs. M: Not so many.

Mills: You have a reputation for it.

Mrs. M: Now isn't that curious. I have more figure things, more portraits.

Macky: We could have done much more, but we just didn't. Both of us. She was teaching for twenty years. And I was too. There's nothing like teaching to stimulate but keep you down.

Mills: You put your creative imagination and thought into the process of teaching. I think that's just as important work as painting. You have fewer material things to show for it, but I think in the long run you probably are responsible for more creative accomplishment.

Macky: And, of course, you know that all the work you do anyway, when history is written, will be forgotten. I have no illusions about that. I know what good work is. I'm not offering any apologies -- our work is good, but to live up to the ideals we would like to is a life's work. You just can't do it occasionally on weekends. To paint you've got to be selfish. You should ride roughshod over people.

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Gilb: Do people come to the Bay Area to study art, or do your art schools just draw from the area itself?

Macky: In the College of Arts and Crafts, we have people from all over the world, from all over California and from everywhere.

Mrs. M: We've got one from Arabia and ...

Macky: We've got a very good school there, of its kind. Its weak spot, which I've always regretted, is the fact that it is a teacher training school. Therefore, the students have to learn a little of this and a little of that. First of all, I taught here eight years when it was in Berkeley. Then I was busy at the School of Fine Arts. Then Martinez died, and they asked me to come over. First asked Con, and she wouldn't come, and I came over to teach the life class. And I worked like a demon, as usual, and had a wonderful class. And next term I said, "Where's the class?" "Oh, they've had you. This is a new bunch."

We've always been accustomed to teaching a life class, composition classes, still life and sculpture and all those things that they had at the California School of Fine Arts.

Mrs. M: Now, over there they are in trouble, because they want to make it pay, and so they are going to have all the other subjects as they possibly can. And the administration costs so much that they're in trouble, too. If they could only keep it a real fine arts school.

Mills: They have a degree program right now, which involves English and history and ...

Macky: In the end, you get a young fellow who gets a degree and he's taken all these things -- well, you find with few

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Macky: exceptions, they just can't paint. At least I don't think they can. They get into your exhibits just the same. Nevertheless, they're not really painters.

Mills: What would you think of having an art school at a graduate school level where people came who already had a bachelor's degree background?

Macky: That would be all right. Get their degree out of the way and then really start to learn painting and really work at it like they do in France. Whoever goes to France to take courses in the psychological foundations of education, for example? Or in philosophy. Unless you want to take it on the side.

I've answered six letters this morning, fellows writing out wanting jobs teaching. They've got remarkable degrees -- M. A. degrees -- and I have to write back a nice letter to them saying in the first place, we're not contemplating any changes, but if we were, I would like to see you personally, would like to know what kind of work you do. Unfortunately, the degrees don't count, because everybody's got a degree nowadays.

Gilb: Do you have to have the degree, anyway?

Macky: No, you don't have to, no.

Mills: Have you seen this Graziotti, this Italian fellow? Louis Siegriest thinks a great deal of his work.

Macky: I do, too. The drawings I have seen of his are remarkable. So I've written to Cleveland to find out about him. The art of the Renaissance seems just to be transplanted in this man to Cleveland. They wrote back and told me, "Yes.

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Macky: His drawings were remarkable. They were done years ago in Italy." Those drawings -- I'm not accustomed to using superlatives, but I would say those drawings are comparable to some of the best done by Leonardo da Vinci.

Gilb: How did you happen to hear about him?

Macky: He came to see me. Now, the question is, can he teach. I know he knows a great deal. He knows more about the technique of art, drawing and anatomy (I'm not sure about his composition) than most people around here. He's interested more in the abstruse and mathematical relationship of form. And he's creating, at his place up in Berkeley there, a number of things made of balsa wood -- I don't know the language even: hexagons and octagons and polygons interweaving with each other, all made out of wood. And drawings, if you please, to illustrate them. He's writing a book which will have 300 illustrations in it.

I said, "Why are you making these things? What's it all for?" His drawings of perspective are most abstruse. The casting of shadows and all that sort of thing. I said to him, "Why don't you keep it simpler? The students won't understand this at all in this country. It's far too deep, too abstruse, for them."

And he's making these things. He's got a string across his room: one, two, three, four twelve of them made. Different sizes. Small ones. All kinds of shapes interlocked with each other, every one absolutely perfect

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Macky: mathematically. He says, "They've got to be absolutely exact, because if I make this a 16th of an inch too long, the next is going to be a 16th of an inch too long, and it's going to repeat itself so it won't come out in the end." You ought to see those things! Some day you ought to have an exhibition of them.

Gilb: The man sounds like an isolated genius, of the type that only comes once in a long while.

Macky: He is a genius. He's not a practical kind of a fellow. He's a lost duck here -- I don't know how he's living. He had a fellowship some place down here by Palos Verdes. And he had a certain amount of money, because he did a great deal of teaching in Cleveland at the Art League there and the Cleveland Art School. And then they give him a scholarship. And he's used up all his money in doing some sculpture. Now, he brought a sculpture back here on a trailer (he didn't have any money). And he's got a place in Berkeley and he doesn't know what he's going to do next, to pay his rent and whatnot.

Oh, yes. He's teaching over at Dick Stevens', in San Francisco. But he'd love to come to our school. I like talking to him. He's the only man in all the years I've ever had that I've stood up and shaken hands with and said, "I congratulate you. You're a real draftsman. You've the first draftsman I've ever met in San Francisco." He really understands the language; I can talk to him, and he understands it.

Mrs. M: Everything's superlative -- but get on to the sculpture.

mathematically. He says, "They've got to be absolutely exact, because if I make this a foot or an inch too long, the next is going to be a foot or an inch too long, and it's going to repeat itself so it won't come out in the end." You ought to see those things! Some day you ought

Mrs. M.

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He is a genius. He's got a practical kind of a fellow. He's a lost duck here -- I don't know how he's living. He had a fellowship some place down here by James Van Der... and he had a certain amount of money, because he did a great deal of teaching in Cleveland at the Art League there and the Cleveland Art School. And then they give him a scholarship. And he's used up all his money in doing some sculpture. Now, he brought a sculpture back here on a trailer (he didn't have any money). And he's got a place in Berkeley and he doesn't know what he's going to do next, to pay his rent and whatnot.

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Everything's superlative -- but get on to the sculpture.

Mrs. M.

Macky: Oh, then the sculpture. All right, his interest in sculpture. Well, he showed me a photograph of it. Anticlimax. Gosh alive, he's got (he must be working on this thing -- I don't know how big it is -- hope it isn't too large), he's got two fellows boxing. And it's awful. I leave it to you to decide, but I think it's ...

Mrs. M: I think it's wonderful.

Macky: I don't think it is. He's got a great hole in the middle there, and it's semi-realistic. I've been trying to find out from him if he understands the trend of thinking that has developed in this country in the last forty years in drawing. I said, "Now, your drawing is just the Renaissance translated into America. It doesn't have anything to do with America at all." He can draw most exquisitely -- just like Michelangelo (maybe not quite the fire of Michelangelo). It's more like those exquisite things by Leonardo da Vinci. And that's going some. But when it comes to sculpture, good gracious me!

Gilb: Who do you think are some of the outstanding artists in this Bay region today?

Macky: Oh, I don't like to pass judgment on them. Lundy Siegriest is very promising. When he was graduated from our school, I said, "Listen. Lundy, if you really would get in and learn to draw, I think you have a great future." Maybe he doesn't have to learn to draw.

But in our school where 80 per cent of our students are going to be commercial artists (much as I hate it), they have to learn to draw.

CONSTANCE AND SPENCER MACKY, BOTH ARTISTS

Gilb: Do you two talk things over together, do you influence each other's work very much?

Macky: I don't think we talk our work over very much. We understand each other so well, we don't have to.

Mrs. M: Naturally, we have worked together a great deal. We went to the same art school. That's where we met. Then we went to Paris, France.

Gilb: Do you ever criticize each other's paintings?

Macky: She'll say, "That's a funny looking head," or something like that. She's not at all flattering. But I'm a great admirer of her work. I'll show you some of her early work. It's very beautiful. I think that most people delight in saying that she's a better painter than I am.

Mrs. M: It's been a wonderful gag, you know.

Macky: If they don't know what to say, they say that.

Mrs. M: That's always been the way with artists, when there is a man and woman together, they say, "I think she's a better painter than he."

Macky: Instinctively, you are a better painter. You've a finer sense of color.

Mrs. M: That's very foolish of you to say. I wish you would stop.

Macky: I gave her a good buildup before she ever came here - it was genuine. She was a very brilliant student.

Mrs. M: I haven't pushed you up because there's been no need for it. So there!

Macky: Thank you.

Mrs. M: His drawings are the things I've liked very much. They're

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Mrs. M: more fanciful and ...

Gilb: And you have been together all these years in school, teaching, painting.

Macky: Oh, yes. We've been a wonderful team. But when we taught over there at the School of Fine Arts, she didn't teach in my class and I didn't teach in hers. We've always had big classes. When she first started teaching over there, she had 60 in her class.

Gilb: I've heard fine things about Mrs. Macky's teaching.

Macky: Well, she is so honest and sincere.

Mrs. M: You know, the students have never complained, they've always been so wonderful. You'd think they'd say, "Why didn't you teach me to do those funny abstracts." It's a mystery to me why they haven't.

Macky: I remember when she was on her way to Europe, or where were you going? Well, anyway she was in New York once (I wasn't there), and she had a big, big reception of all the students we've had who were there. When I was in New York, the same thing happened.

Gilb: You've taught thousands of young men and women, haven't you?

Mrs. M: And the terrible thing is, as time goes on they change and you forget them. And you feel terrible. There are so many, you know.

Macky: One of the students we had was Fred Vidar, became a recipient of the Chaloner Foundation and became a nationally known painter. He used to come at night. In the daytime he used to work his way through. He became nationally known and even internationally known. Among our best students were

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM A LETTER BY SPENCER MACKY,

Macky: two well-known illustrators in New York, Dot and Don McKay.

Dot McKay has had full pages in color in Esquire for years and years. And Don illustrates books, very well indeed.

In pen and ink. We taught them for years. Jack Atherton was a pupil of hers.

Mrs. M: We were very fond of all of them, you know.

...I arrived in Oakland from Europe at the very end of 1910 in the Liberty Hotel where I had a studio. Sabjohn and Marcos were the art dealers of Oakland, and Fred Marcos subsequently became mayor of the city. At that time, 1911, San Francisco was still more or less of a shambles, and I was under the impression that Oakland was to be the future city of the North. I remember asking the mayor of Piedmont, Hugh Craig, what he thought and he said, "Well, the beans are in San Francisco. Oakland will never be the financial center of the North."

I remember that at that time I also met a painter who lived in Piedmont named Gordon Gault. He was a member of the Bohemian Club in San Francisco and he gave me a letter of introduction as a guest there. I remember his saying to me, "What is your 'stunt'?" I was surprised to have been asked a question. I soon found out, however, that artists had used "stunt" whereby they made enough money to live on. The word "stunt" was painting landscapes, which were popular in the eyes of Chestnut Welch and others, and also making replicas of other paintings which were popular. As a matter of fact, of course, he was a very good artist in his own right but this particular form of commercialism was his "stunt".

It was at this time that I painted the portrait of the mayor of Piedmont, Hugh Craig, and the last time I saw it it was hanging in the Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco,

two well-known illustrators in New York, Dot and Don McKay.
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EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER BY SPENCER MACKY,

DATED MAY 14, 1954

"...I arrived in Oakland from Europe at the very end of 1910 (age 30), and I started my professional career in Oakland in 1911 in the Albany block where I had a studio. Rabjohn and Morcom were the art dealers of Oakland, and Fred Morcom subsequently became mayor of the city. At that time, 1911, San Francisco was still more or less of a shambles, and I was under the impression that Oakland was to be the future city of the North. I remember asking the mayor of Piedmont, Hugh Craig, what he thought and he said, "Well, the banks are in San Francisco. Oakland will never be the financial center of the North."

"I remember that at that time I also met a painter who lived in Piedmont named Gordon Coutts. He was a member of the Bohemian Club in San Francisco and he gave me a letter of introduction as a guest there. I remember his asking me, "What is your 'stunt'?" I was surprised to have such a question. I soon found out, however, that artists had some speciality whereby they made enough money to live on. His particular "stunt" was painting landscapes, which were popular, in the style of Thaddeus Welch and others, and also making replicas of other paintings which were popular. As a matter of fact, of course, he was a very good artist in his own right but this particular form of commercialism was his "stunt".

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EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER BY SPENCER MAXCY,

DATED MAY 14, 1954

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"It was at this time that I painted the portrait of the mayor of Piedmont, Hugh Craig, and the last time I saw it it was hanging in the Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco.

"I soon found that there was very little art life on this side of the Bay, and as I have recorded in the interviews with you, students began to come across from San Francisco to look at my paintings in Oakland, and perhaps you can simply use what I have said there in continuing my remarks as to how I finally moved over to San Francisco.

"Now in the story I told you about the election at the San Francisco Art Association in connection with the California School of Fine Arts, I should record that I had met here in Oakland two young men, one named Pedro de Lemos, and his brother John de Lemos. They were both commercial artists. However, they must have been very smart because at the time of the turmoil in connection with the change-over of the regime of the San Francisco Art Association, Pedro de Lemos had for some time been the director of that school which then was called the San Francisco Institute of Art (it was originally called the Mark Hopkins Art Institute). No doubt he had succeeded Captain Fletcher as director after he had gone east.

"I am tolerably certain when I come to think of it now that it was largely due to the disdain which the artists felt regarding Pedro de Lemos and his regime that activated the movement to oust the whole Board of Directors and faculty of that institution. I can just remember now the slighting remarks that were made by the various artists regarding the type of art that was taught at that time, and particularly the crafts which were of a minor, second-rate character and not at all on the professional level. There were so many little knickknacks being made -- more or less such as they teach in high schools, I believe.

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"When I came to think of it the condition of the Art of the school, in fact it was in revulsion against such minor crafts that they decided to do away with them altogether and to concentrate on Fine Arts - and to emphasize their credo they changed the name to emphatically underscore their convictions.

"There was growing up a feeling that such an art school was a disgrace to the community. This must have been the case, because as I told you before, so many of the male students left that school in 1911 and started a new art league in San Francisco, hiring a studio atop the Crocker Bank on Post and Market Streets. I was engaged to take charge of it. So the new result was that I had most of the students and the San Francisco Art Association had the building and a few of the girl students. I carried the movement on for five years until eventually I was asked to join the new California School of Fine Arts in 1917.

"It should be recorded here that there were some very fine people on the faculty and no doubt there was an injustice done to them by this precipitous movement which, fortunately, I had nothing to do with. There were Theodore Wores, John Stanton, Earl Cummings, the sculptor, Frank van Sloun, the painter, and several others including Mrs. Alice Chittenden who taught the Saturday classes (she remained with the institution, however, for many years). Frank van Sloun was one of the most capable painters we have ever had here in the west, being a figure draftsman and a pupil of Robert Henri, and a fellow student with George Bellows in the east. Frank van Sloun seemed to retire to his studio and associate himself thereafter mostly with the Bohemian Club where he painted some very notable murals which are still hanging there.

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"When I come to think of it the condition of the art of the school, coupled with the revelations expressed by the Panama-Pacific Exposition, particularly in the Annex, and what with the current of dissatisfaction, the movement which I have expressed in these notes came about more or less through an accumulation of factors of dissatisfaction which I have noted above -- a movement against the status quo and complacency. I suppose these movements in the art world appear periodically and this was one with which I happened to have been associated.

"I remember that after the election of the new Board of Directors headed by John I. Walter, the old Board and the artists staged a big evening at the Sequoia Club where I found myself the center of a great deal of deference. They were trying to persuade me to head up a newschool in opposition to the one from which they had all been ousted. I was very flattered to find them all so nice to me all of a sudden, but I remember very stoutly maintaining that I had given my word to join the new faculty and that I would not go back on it. That seemed to end any opposition which the California School of Fine Arts might have had under its new name and with its new regime.

"That was in 1917, and I am quite sure that the Palace of Fine Arts was still operating under the direction of Mr. J. Nilsen Laurvik. In fact our annual exhibitions used to be held out there and it seemed there was quite a future for the San Francisco Art Association because, for a number of years, it was a very active art center. But, as usual, hard times came again finally and it was impossible to keep up the salaries and expenses in connection with that operation of the Palace of Fine Art which was under the auspices of the San Francisco Art Association, located where the Mark Hopkins Hotel now

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"is situated. Finally Laurvik left for the east and I remember, as I have noted, that for many weeks I was collecting and cataloguing the books which remained there and bringing them into the new building on Chestnut and Jones Streets. That was certainly after 1926, which was the year the California school of Fine Arts opened on Chestnut and Jones Streets.

"I am doing the best I can to edit these pages without destroying the rather racy, slangy language which I have used and which appears to give it a certain amount of life, but I have to be careful not to appear too vulgar in print.

"All I can say is that between these areas of time and place such as 1917 at the old Mark Hopkins site, the opening of the new school on Chestnut and Jones Streets in 1926, the depression in the thirties, the second World War, the calamitous financial situations which occur in these art associations, all could be used in the relating of the fluctuating story of the art history of this area.

"I left the San Francisco Art Association in 1944 to become the President of this College. I have been here, therefore, nearly 10 years, and we see again one of those depressions and one of those climactic experiences across the Bay which I feel are symptomatic of the art situation here in the west.

"As I conclude this letter to you I would record the fact that this week it is announced that I will retire as President of the California College of Arts and Crafts as of September 1st, 1954, and become President Emeritus and Dean of Art."

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